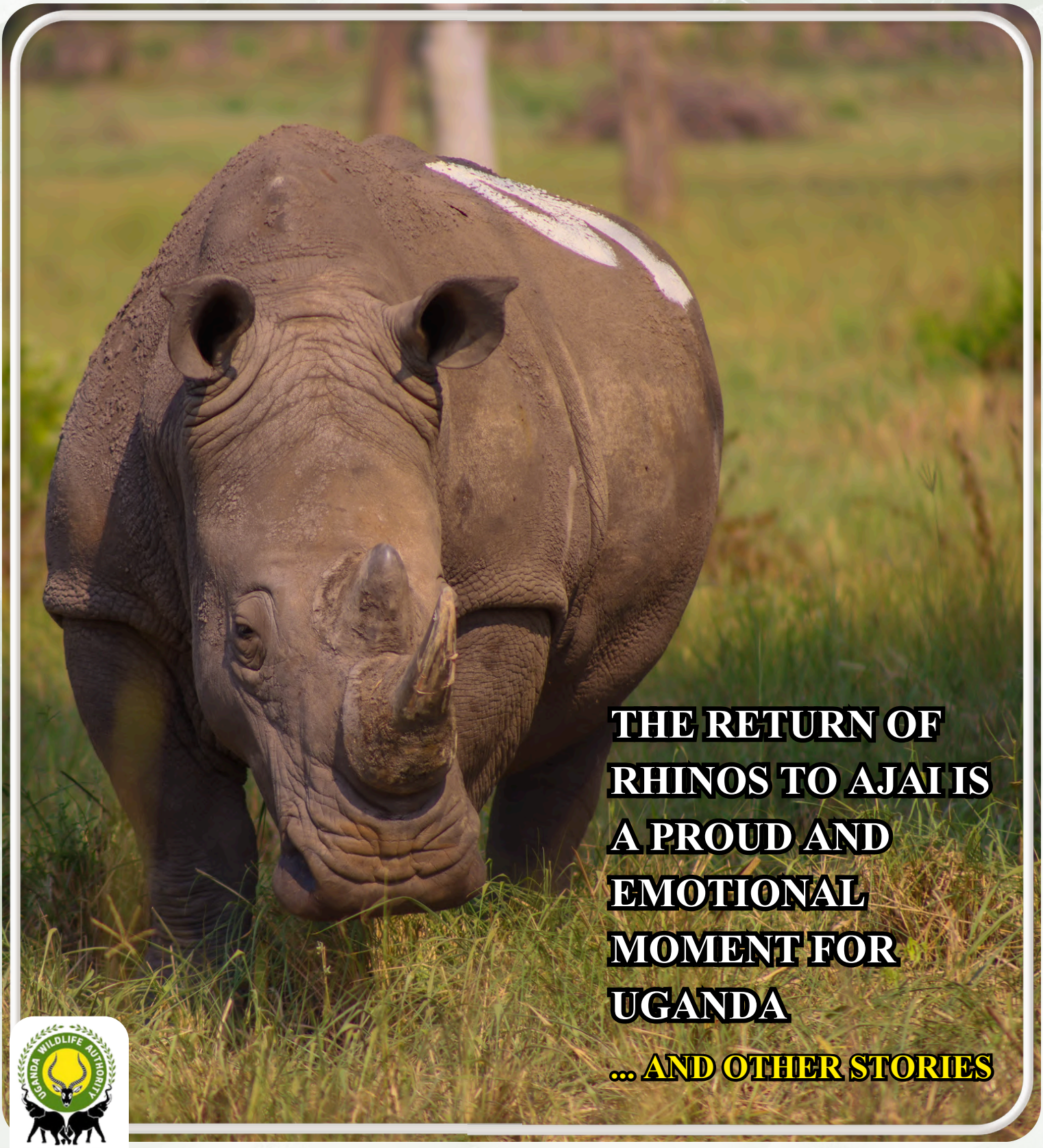
THE WILDLIFE MIRROR

Keeping you informed

Issue 7 | JAN 2026



THE RETURN OF RHINOS TO AJAI IS A PROUD AND EMOTIONAL MOMENT FOR UGANDA

... AND OTHER STORIES

UWA
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UGANDA WILDLIFE Marathon
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JAN 2026 | Issue 7

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Keeping you informed

EDITOR

From the Editor's Desk

Hangi Bashir
Ass. Commissioner Communications

This issue comes at a time when conservation in Uganda continues to demand not only strong protection efforts but also informed public participation, credible storytelling, and shared responsibility. As Uganda Wildlife Authority, our mandate goes beyond safeguarding wildlife and protected areas; it also requires us to communicate transparently, educate consistently, and engage meaningfully with the people whose lives, livelihoods, and heritage are closely intertwined with nature.

In this edition, we bring you stories that reflect the realities on the ground —stories of resilience by frontline rangers, deliberate efforts to mitigate human–wildlife conflict, progress in ecosystem restoration, and partnerships that are strengthening conservation outcomes across the country. These narratives are not merely reports of activities; they are accounts of commitment, sacrifice, innovation, and collaboration in the face of evolving conservation challenges.

We also highlight the critical role of media and communication in shaping public understanding of wildlife conservation. Accurate, responsible, and solutions oriented reporting remains essential in building trust, promoting accountability, and inspiring collective action. As such, this publication continues to serve as a platform for evidence based information, balanced perspectives, and constructive dialogue around conservation and sustainable tourism.

I extend sincere appreciation to our contributors whose insights and experiences enrich these pages. Your voices help bring conservation closer to the public and reinforce the shared ownership of Uganda's natural heritage.

We invite you to read, reflect, and engage. Conservation succeeds when information empowers action, and when every stakeholder understands their role in protecting what we hold in trust for future generations.

Thank you for your continued interest and support.

CONTRIBUTORS TEAM

Nakayima Diana Kibuuka
Communication Officer
WRITER

Musiimenta Scovia
Communication Officer
WRITER

Musau Suleiman
Communication Officer
WRITER

Najjuko Jean
Communication Officer
WRITER

Cpl. Amutuhire Ronald
DESIGN & LAYOUT

Rhinos roam Ajai Wildlife Reserve again

"The return of rhinos to Ajai is a proud and emotional moment for Uganda. It reflects years of dedicated conservation work and a highly successful breeding programme at Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary".

The drums of the Ajai Kingdom echoed as the ankle bells of the 15 Ajai clans jingled in unison-whistles sounded, throwing the crowd gathered at Ajai Wildlife Reserve into a dance, celebrating Uganda's historic first-ever translocation of rhinos from Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary to Ajai Wildlife Reserve in Madi-Okollo district.

This event marked not only the translocation and restoration of the Ajai ecosystem but also the return of rhinos to their ancestral home in the West Nile region.

Unveiling the rhinos at Ajai Wildlife Reserve in Madi-Okollo district on 12th.January. 2026, the Minister for Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities Hon. Tom R Butime noted that the restoration of rhinos at Ajai signifies a revival of a vital part of the country's natural heritage.

The successful translocation of Four Southern White Rhinos by Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), from Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary to Ajai Wildlife Reserve took place between the 5th-7th. January .2026 – Under the first phase a national programme that will see 20 rhinos relocated to Ajai.

This initiative forms a key component of the National Rhino Conservation Strategy, which is dedicated to rebuilding and safeguarding Uganda's rhino

Minister Tom Butime (2nd left) cuts ribbon to unveil the rhino conservation in Ajai

population while restoring the species to parts of its historical range in northern Uganda.

Rhinos captured at Ziwa for translocation

Although the Southern White Rhino is not an indigenous subspecies, in Uganda its introduction to Ajai Wildlife Reserve is guided by the principle of conservation equivalence. The native Northern White Rhino subspecies is now functionally extinct, yet both the Northern and Southern white rhino historically belonged to the same white subspecies prior to their separation. As such, the reintroduction of Southern White Rhinos provides an ecologically credible alternative for restoring rhinos to Uganda's landscapes.

The four rhinos are now under close observation as they adapt to their new environment. The second phase, involving the remaining 16 rhinos, will take place after successful monitoring and stabilisation of the first group.

Commenting on the milestone, UWA Executive Director, Dr. James Musinguzi, said that the translocation marked a new chapter in Uganda's conservation journey.

"The return of rhinos to Ajai is a proud and emotional moment for Uganda. It reflects years of dedicated conservation work and a highly successful breeding programme at Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary, where our rhino population has steadily grown under careful protection. This next step strengthens species recovery and restores an important part of our natural heritage for future generations", Dr Musinguzi added.

Dr. James Musinguzi speaking at the unveling of rhinos at Ajai

Uganda once had both rhino species; the Northern White and the Eastern Black. The Northern White Rhinos were confined west of the Albert Nile in the then West Nile district, with their home in Ajai, while the Eastern Black Rhinos were confined to the east of the Albert Nile and North of Victoria Nile, spanning the then Acholi, Lango and Karamoja areas. However, they were wiped out during the period of insecurity in the country due to poaching and habitat loss, the last rhino was killed in Narus Valley in Kidepo in 1983.

The systematic rhino reintroduction/introduction program started in 1997 with the establishment of Rhino Fund Uganda. Awareness began in 2001 with the importation of 2 rhinos from Kenya and their placement at the former UWEC. In 2005/6, breeding started at Ziwa with the importation of 4 rhinos from Solio in Kenya and 2 from Disney Animal Kingdom in Florida, USA.

The six formed the founder population for the breeding program at Ziwa that grew to 49. In December 2025, an additional 8 Southern White Rhinos were imported from South Africa to supplement the Ziwa population in line with the National Rhino Strategy goal.

The success of this programme depends on UWA's shared responsibility and pride in Uganda's wildlife heritage and thus neighbouring communities and the wider public are called on to support this national conservation effort by reporting any activity that may threaten the Rhinos' safety.

The Madi- Okollo people dancing at the unveiling ceremony

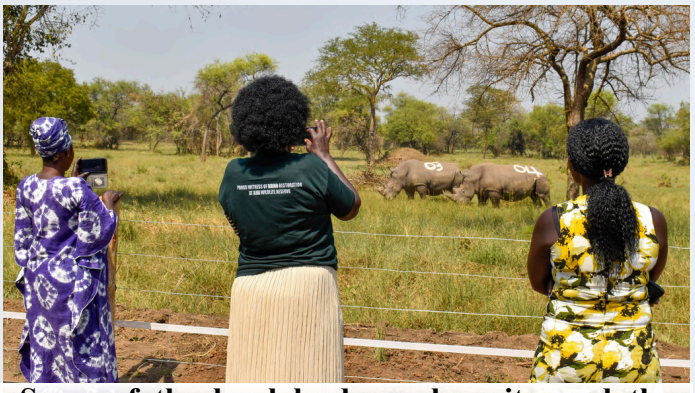
The Significance of Rhinos to the West Nile people

For the Ajai (Madi) community in West Nile, known as the "Guardians of the Rhino," rhinos represent much more than just wild animals. They are a powerful emblem of their identity, strength, and heritage, deeply rooted in their culture and folklore. The rhino symbolizes the greatness of their people and their bond with the land. Chief Ajai himself founded the sanctuary for rhinos in 1937, which is now called the Ajai Wildlife Reserve.

Local landmarks such as Rhino Camp and the former White Rhino Hotel in Arua are named after the rhino, highlighting how closely the animal is tied to the community's identity and important places.

According to Ajai traditional beliefs, rhinos are highly respected, and consuming their meat is forbidden. They believe that eating rhino meat would cause the stomach to swell, leading to illness and eventually death.

The return of rhinos to Ajai is seen by local leaders as a form of spiritual renewal, describing it as healing because they felt their land was incomplete without this iconic species.



Some of the local leaders who witnessed the return of rhinos at Ajai

For the younger generation, rhinos serve as a living connection to the stories of their ancestors, helping to transform the reserve from a former "poacher's den" into a proud national symbol.

After years of advocacy to bring rhinos back to their homeland, and in line with the national conservation strategy, their reintroduction is also expected to boost tourism, generate employment, and regenerate the West Nile region.

Uganda's Rhino conservation efforts catches an international eye

Following decades of efforts to restore and protect rhinos in Uganda, the U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt Rhino Fundraising Campaign was launched on 18th.December. 2025, in New York and live streamed at Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary, aiming at securing long-term financing for rhino conservation.

A hybrid launch came after the US–Africa Business Connect Roosevelt Africa Trail Conference in New York City and a campaign, was developed by the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) in partnership with the Roosevelt Africa Trail and the Theodore Roosevelt Association.

The Campaign will unfold through a series of milestones. A mid-campaign engagement at the Roosevelt Library is scheduled for July 4, 2026, followed by the official christening of the Roosevelt Rhino in September 2026, that will be named after the former United States President Theodore Roosevelt, drawing inspiration from his 1909–1910 Smithsonian–Roosevelt African Expedition. While rooted in history, the initiative is firmly focused on the present—highlighting Uganda's steady progress in rebuilding rhino populations and strengthening conservation systems after decades of absence in the wild.

By following the journey of the Roosevelt Rhino from sanctuary protection to eventual rewilding, the campaign will offer global audiences a practical view of how species recovery is planned, funded, and implemented. The christening ceremony will take place in Uganda and will be officiated by a member of the Roosevelt family, reinforcing the international character of the initiative. This will be the second rhino named after a U.S. president, following "Obama," a name that carried strong resonance in East Africa.

The campaign is supported by several linked initiatives designed to broaden public engagement and support. These include Roosevelt Encounters Africa, a children's educational series produced by NABU, which will feature The Rhino Named Roosevelt and integrate Quick Response (QR), codes that allow audiences to contribute directly to conservation efforts.

From Left; Jackline Nyiracyiza Besigye, Dr. James Musinguzi, Prof. Jonathon Earlie, Celia Nabeta, Joshua Ssentongo

“Obama”, the first born rhino at Ziwa named after former US president Barrack Obama

Private sector and digital innovations also form part of the campaign. Roosevelt Africa Safari Coffee, developed by Kahawa 1893 in partnership with the Roosevelt Africa Trail, will feature the Roosevelt Rhino as a specialty blend, with a portion of proceeds directed toward rhino conservation. In addition, the Roosevelt Africa Virtual Trail will offer an immersive digital experience, enabling audiences around the world to engage with the rhino’s habitat and Uganda’s conservation work.

At the launch UWA Executive Director Dr. James Musinguzi noted that; **“Initiatives such as the Roosevelt Rhino Campaign help strengthen international understanding and support for wildlife recovery, emphasizing that conservation success depends on sustained investment, institutional strength, and trusted partnerships”.**

H.E. Ambassador Adonia Ayebare, Uganda’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations, reaffirmed government support, calling the campaign a strategic platform advancing conservation diplomacy, heritage preservation, and sustainable development.

The campaign aims at mobilizing USD 5 million under UWA’s “Name a Rhino” Initiative.

Lake Mburo and Kibale CA's aiming at better services

Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) Board of Trustees conducted a five-day supervisory visit to Lake Mburo and Kibale Conservation Areas to monitor ongoing developments and gain insight into daily park activities.

Led by UWA Board Chairperson Prof. James Kalema, the team first visited Lake Mburo National Park before proceeding to Kibale Conservation Area. At both Conservation Areas, the Board was welcomed by the respective chief wardens—Fred Kisame Eria at Lake Mburo and John Justice Tibesigwa at Kibale—and received a Guard of Honour followed by an inspection of the parade.

At Lake Mburo National Park, Chief Warden Kisame provided an overview of the conservation area, discussing wildlife populations, surveys, and proposed strategies to tackle challenges such as drought, which has contributed to human-wildlife conflicts and altered habitat conditions.

To address drought-related issues, 12 water points are now fully operational, including two newly constructed and five desilted water sources, ensuring animals have access to water year-round and remain within park boundaries.

Prof. Kalema lauded the staff for their efforts in managing problematic animals and encouraged ongoing innovation to promote peaceful coexistence between wildlife and livestock in neighboring ranches. He also emphasized the significance of conserving Uganda's flora and fauna, noting that the country is home to over 5,000 plant species, with Lake Mburo playing a crucial role in preserving Acacia-dominated habitats.

Some of the water dams constructed in Lake Mburo National Park

The Board expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities for supporting the construction of a 24-room accommodation facility for rangers at Minekye. Additionally, a new 12-room ranger housing unit at Rwonyo was inaugurated, with the Board noting that these modern facilities will

enhance living conditions for frontline staff, boost morale, and strengthen field operations.

During the visit to Kibale Conservation Area, Chief Warden Tibesigwa highlighted the area's conservation importance, ongoing management programs, and community projects such as the production of energy-saving stoves. He also discussed measures to mitigate human-wildlife conflict, including trenching and building boardwalks to reduce elephant intrusions.

At Mainaro, the Board commended forest restoration efforts that have rehabilitated nearly 10,000 hectares of indigenous tree species since 1994, successfully transforming a previously degraded landscape and attracting wildlife back to the area.

Given UWA's focus on human-wildlife conflict, the Board appreciated the installation of trenches, boardwalks, and beehives in Kibale National Park as effective mitigation measures. During interactions with community members, a one Dodovic Maggara, whose farm borders Kibale National Park, shared that these interventions have significantly improved life around his farm, turning cry into joy as elephants no longer raid his crops.

Additional developments in Kanyanchu include plans for a new Visitor Information Centre and entrance gate. At Sebitoli, there are proposals to build a multipurpose hall and a canopy walk to further enhance tourism in this biodiversity-rich area.

To improve staff welfare, new accommodation facilities are being constructed at Mainaro, which also features a water supply project, along with a 20-room hostel and a conservation education centre to support education and tourism initiatives. More staff housing is also being built at Bumaga in Semuliki National Park and Kunama in the Toro-Semliki Wildlife Reserve.

In his speech, Dr. James Musinguzi congratulated the KCA staff for winning gold in the Inter-CA football tournament and encouraged rangers to continue respecting human rights while carrying out their duties enforcing wildlife laws. He stressed the importance of innovation and hard work and strongly condemned illegal activities such as fraudulent tracking and corruption.

Inauguration of the rangers' accommodation at Rwoyo

Board inspecting unfinished rangers' accommodation at KCA

UWA Board of Trustees also held a meeting with concessionaires from different establishments at Sky Hotel, Naguru – Kampala, to discuss the operations, management, and sustainability of concessions within the National Parks.

Uganda Wins Red Medal in Biodiversity Conservation

After the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), Uganda, along with other countries worldwide, committed to reversing biodiversity loss. This historic agreement established 23 ambitious goals to be met by 2030, aiming to stop and reverse biodiversity decline, restore ecosystems, and ensure fair sharing of benefits from genetic resources.

In 2023, Uganda's National Environment and Management Authority (NEMA), with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), developed a Uganda-specific roadmap to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Through this roadmap, Uganda has shown strong early leadership and made significant progress, including:

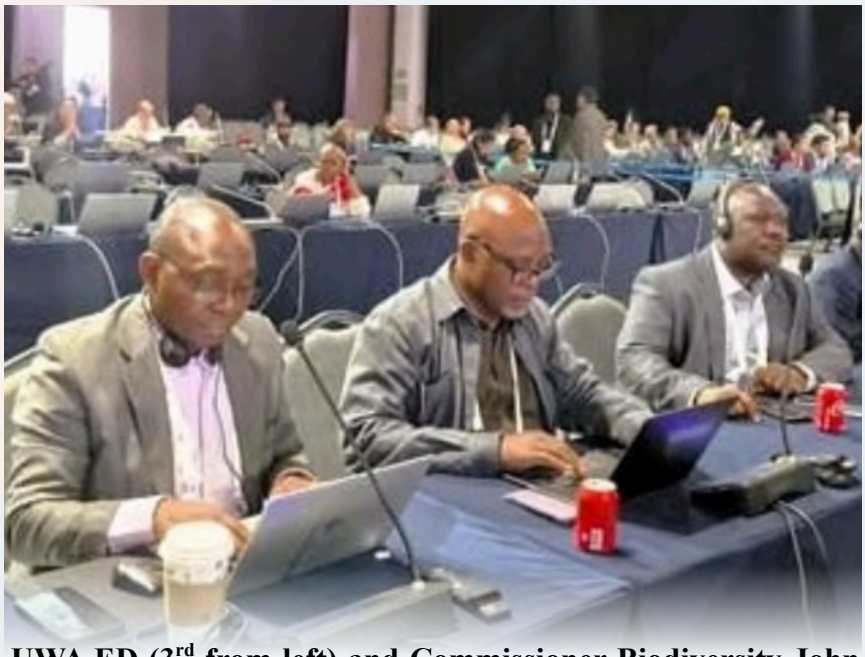
- Becoming the first African country to submit its national targets aligned with the KMGBF to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat.
- Creating a National Roadmap that enables ministries, departments, agencies, civil society, the private sector, academia, indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs), media, and development partners to collaborate in achieving the set targets.
- Advancing efforts to identify subsidies harmful to biodiversity, with plans to phase them out and increase positive incentives.
- Mobilizing financial resources to close its biodiversity funding gap through mechanisms such as Payment for Ecosystem Services, green bonds, and attracting private investment.
- Incorporating biodiversity values into its National Development Plan and sector-specific strategies.
- Working on restoring degraded habitats, promoting sustainable agriculture and forestry, and planting native tree species.

Uganda's dedication to aligning financing strategies with biodiversity objectives is vital, as the country hosts one of the world's richest concentrations of biodiversity. It is home to nearly 19,000 species of plants and animals, including over 380 mammal species, more than 1,000 bird species, and numerous reptiles, amphibians, and fish that require protection.

This aligns with GBF targets 2, 3, 8, 10, and 11, which highlight the importance of nature-based solutions for climate mitigation and adaptation.

The Reverse the Red initiative, officially launched in 2019 by co-chairs, the International Union for Conservation of Nature Species Survival Commission (IUCN SSC) and the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA), is dedicated to supporting strategic, recovery-focused, and evidence-based actions for species conservation.

It also assists countries in achieving Goal A and Target 4 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) are essential tools in combating species decline, serving as the foundation for each country's response to the biodiversity crisis.



UWA ED (3rd from left) and Commissioner Biodiversity John Makombo (left), attending the IUCN meeting

UWA contributes to IUCN Global Conservation Strategy

At the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, from October 9 to 15, 2025, the Uganda Wildlife Authority delegation, led by Executive Director Dr. James Musinguzi, played a prominent role in discussions aimed at shaping global conservation policies and strategies.

The Congress brought together governments, conservation agencies, scientists, development partners, and civil society organizations to address issues such as setting conservation priorities, promoting resilient actions, managing climate risks, ensuring equity, fostering nature-positive economies, increasing global visibility, and enhancing collaboration and innovation.

Dr. Musinguzi highlighted Uganda's achievements in wildlife recovery, community-based conservation, and transboundary ecosystem management, with emphasis on of key species like mountain gorillas, elephants, lions, and rhinos. He attributed these successes to strengthened law enforcement, science-driven management, and active community involvement.

He stated, **"Protected areas are more than ecological assets; they are drivers of national development. Investing in conservation means investing in livelihoods, climate resilience, and long-term economic stability."**

During the event, Uganda Wildlife Authority also gained valuable insights on responding to the climate crisis, recognizing ecocide as a crime, promoting indigenous leadership, regulating the commercial wildlife pet trade, and governing artificial intelligence and digital evidence.

The IUCN launched its 4th World Heritage Outlook report, which revealed a worrying decline in the conservation status of natural World Heritage sites due to increasing threats such as climate change, invasive species, and diseases. The report shows that only 57% of sites now have a positive outlook, down from 63% in 2020.

The latest assessment of Mt. Rwenzori National Park rates it as good but with some concerns, particularly related to climate change impacts on its glaciers. (More details at **https://worldheritageoutlook.iucn.org/explore-sites/rwenzori-mountains-national-park**)

The Congress also approved a new 20-year Strategic Vision for the IUCN and endorsed the 2026–2029 Programme and Financial Plan. The Strategic Vision, titled "Unite for Nature on the Path to 2045," provides the framework for the upcoming IUCN Programme (2026-2029) and future initiatives. It aims to create a just world that values and protects nature by tackling biodiversity loss, climate change, and social equity.

The plan emphasizes scaling inclusive conservation, integrating nature into key sectors such as food and the blue economy, and embedding the rights of Indigenous Peoples, youth, and women, while linking ecological health with human well-being through transformative, nature-positive actions.

Strengthening Conservation Through Partnerships

Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), through its mandate to strengthen partnerships, has continued to attract more partners in walking the journey of conservation.

These that range from government institutions, local authorities, conservation organizations, academic institutions, and private sector actors, have signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), with the Authority, focusing on wildlife protection, habitat restoration, research, tourism development, infrastructure improvement, community engagement, and combating wildlife crime.

UWA ED Dr, James Musinguzi notes that; “No single institution can deliver conservation alone - These partnerships allow us to leverage expertise, resources, and innovation for greater impact”.

Dr. Siefert Ludwig, renowned wildlife veterinarian and tropical animal protection specialist, signed a research-focused MoU with UWA, aiming at enhancing life science research, strengthen conservation initiatives, and support sustainable wildlife management, especially lions in Queen Elizabeth National Park

Freeland, an international conservation NGO, entered into a landmark MoU with UWA to combat wildlife crime and promote cross-border conservation. The focus is on; strengthening UWA’s ranger force, supporting joint investigations and specialized training, establishing a joint working group for sustained coordination and donations of essential field equipment and technical support for human–wildlife conflict mitigation, including collaboration with Kisoro Police

PRIMAKLIMA donated a brand-new Isuzu 4x4 truck (UA 347 CG) to support UWA–Face Project activities in Kibale National Park. The handover took place at UWA Headquarters in Kamwokya, Kampala. This contribution is part of a two-vehicle donation, with customs clearance for a Land Cruiser, the second vehicle, in its final stages.

Fighting Dichrostachys Cinerea in Queen Elizabeth National Park yields positive results

Invasive species management efforts in Queen Elizabeth Conservation Area (QECA) have intensified to combat the spread of Dichrostachys cinerea, a thorny shrub that is transforming the park's savanna ecosystem into dense bushland.

Gazetted in 1952, Queen Elizabeth National Park, is traditionally a savanna ecosystem, that is currently experiencing a shift towards bushland due to altered rainfall patterns and fire regimes.

This change in climate is favoring the spread of Dichrostachys cinerea, which forms dense canopies that choke out native grasses. Currently, over 40% of the park's 79,120 hectares is invaded by this sickle grass which is threatening the park's biodiversity and tourism appeal because it reduces open grazing areas essential for wildlife.

Since 2014, studies and interventions have been underway to control the Kalemanjojo -Initial large-scale mechanical clearing using bulldozers in 2018-2019 temporarily opened up about 4,000 hectares, but regrowth proved aggressive. Biological control methods involving climbers and insects failed to contain the spread. Currently, manual removal through cutting, uprooting, burning, and replanting native grasses has shown the most effective results, achieving 80-85% control in treated areas.

From the last financial year 2024/2025 to date, with support from partners; World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and IFPA-CD, 711.5 hectares of Kalemanjojo have been cleared manually by registered community groups, focusing on key tourism zones in Kasenyi, Kikorongo, Ishasha, Katunguru, and Kyambura to maintain wildlife visibility for visitors.

The Ecological Monitoring and Research Officer at QECA, Philemon Tumwebaze, explains that the process involves three phases per area, which is; initial clearing that involves; cutting, uprooting and burning, follow-up removal of regrowth and native grass planting after six months.

Tumwebaze adds that although this is labor-intensive and costly—costing approximately 4 million Ugandan shillings per hectare for the first phase and 2 million for each subsequent phase—this method remains the most ecologically sustainable.

Biira Medris from Kibiisire United Group, one of the teams contracted to clear invasive plants in the Kasenyi area, explained that their groups use basic tools such as hoes and machetes to remove the invasive species. They are able to clear 5-6 acres within a month. She expressed her appreciation to UWA for the collaboration, noting that they produce charcoal from the collected Kalemanjojo, which acts as a source of income.

This comprehensive invasive management effort highlights the critical role of community participation and multi-agency collaboration in preserving QECA's unique ecosystem for future generations.

Community clearing invasives in Queen Elizabeth NP

Dichrostachys Cinerea

Human Wildlife Conflict mitigation at the wheel of conservation

As Uganda's population continues to grow while land remains limited, humans and wildlife in the country's protected areas—such as National Parks and Wildlife Reserves—are experiencing increasing conflicts due to their shared resources.

These human-wildlife conflicts arise from competition over resources like forests, water sources, grazing areas, and farmland. The most affected regions are those bordering National Parks such as Kidepo Valley, Murchison Falls, and Queen Elizabeth, and all other parks, where both people and animals have suffered losses ranging from crop damage to fatalities.

In the 2024/2025 financial year, the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) addressed 48,463 human-wildlife conflict cases nationwide—ten times more than in 2023/2024—while successfully reducing human deaths by 51.6% and injuries by 55.9%.

This progress has been achieved through various interventions, including community sensitization programs where conservation and awareness teams engage vulnerable communities near the parks to promote coexistence with wildlife. These efforts also extend to educating younger generations in schools.

UWA Education Officer holding a conservation session with pupils.

Electric fencing is another key strategy to mitigate conflicts, especially in areas where elephants and lions come into contact with local communities. In 2024/2025, 52.98 kilometers of electric fencing were installed, 15.5 kilometers of deterrent trenches were maintained, and 14.2 kilometers of buffalo walls were constructed in Mgahinga Gorilla National Park. Additional electric fences are currently being built in the Kidepo Valley Conservation Area, Murchison Falls,

Minister Martin Mugarra inspects an electric fence construction in Kidepo Valley National park

and Queen Elizabeth Conservation Area. Other measures employed by UWA include digging trenches, setting up beehive fences, and planting buffer crops to prevent animals from entering community lands.

The Uganda Wildlife Act Cap 315 also serves as a strong legal framework to discourage intentional harm to wildlife within protected areas. In 2024/2025, authorities made 631 arrests and seized numerous items related to wildlife crimes, including 6,877 poaching tools, a firearm with 14 live rounds, and 2,146 kilograms of various wildlife products—such as 167 kilograms of ivory, 1,146 kilograms of game meat, and five live pangolins.

Climate Change and Human Wildlife Conflict:

Wildlife crime prosecution handled 289 cases involving 478 suspects, resulting in 77 convictions, 58 individuals held on remand, 15 granted bail, and 92 fined. Commissioner for Legal and Corporate Affairs, Sabila Chemonges, emphasizes that ignorance of the law is not a valid excuse and urges Ugandans to familiarize themselves with the Wildlife Act to avoid becoming victims.

In regions severely impacted by prolonged droughts, both wild and domestic animals have been observed moving between parks and nearby communities in search of better grazing areas and water sources. This movement often leads to crop damage when elephants enter community lands, and sometimes results in fatalities among both people and animals.

The construction of water dams in parks such as Lake Mburo and Kidepo Valley National Park, as a strategy to adapt to and mitigate climate change, has helped reduce human-wildlife conflicts to some extent. These dams provide sufficient water for animals within the parks, and when combined with electric fencing and other measures mentioned earlier, they contribute effectively to resolving human-wildlife conflicts.

Chief warden Kidepo inspects dams under construction

UWA Hosts Its Inaugural Clean Energy Expo

As Uganda transit to a greener economy in a bid to fight climate change, it has become every one's responsibility, to see to it that the transition to clean energy becomes known, accessible and affordable.

Uganda Wildlife Authority's division of Education and Community awareness embarked on a journey to make known how clean energy is important in the globe's journey of checking the effects of climate change – In October a first ever clean energy exhibition was held at Uganda Wildlife Conservation Education Centre – UWEC commonly known as Entebbe Zoo under the theme:

The exhibitors that included; schools, government agencies, clean energy entrepreneurs and climate change advocates, showcased a variety of clean energy alternatives that ranged from briquettes, which is charcoal made out of waste, energy saving cooking appliances for solar, biofuels and electricity and many other energy saving innovations.

According to Francis Ruhinirwa, UWA's Conservation Education Officer, the energy alternatives showcased were not future concepts, but ready-to-use solutions capable of transforming lives and reducing pressure on forests across the country.

Emmanuel Mukisa an Ass. Conservation Education Officer at UWA explained that 70% of UWEC's clients are the young people who are the game changers in of the next world and thus it's not enough to educate them only about animals, that's why they saw it equally important to dive into the line of climate change, for this matter clean energy.

In the 2019, Twaweeza report titled: A burning planet? It's already Happening, that highlights climate change impacts, findings indicate that over 90% of Ugandans use bio mass (firewood and charcoal) for cooking despite calls for eco-stoves and alternatives like Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) or biogas to reduce pressure on forests.

The citizens' neglect of using the alternative energy saving cooking appliances is attributed to them being expensive, having no knowledge about them and fear for fake products on the market.

An exhibitor talks to pupils about clean cooking energy

Ass. Commissoner Communications Hangi Bashir speaking to Northern Uganda journalists

Engaging stake holders to strengthen conservation

As challenges of poaching, habitat loss, climate change, and human wildlife conflicts continue to threaten Uganda's ecosystems, there's need for continued sharing of conservation messages to change mindsets.

Through its mission of conserving, and protecting nature in partnership with neighboring communities and other stakeholders, Uganda Wildlife Authority conducted several engagements with various stakeholder groups, amongst which were journalists from different media houses, local government communicators from districts near National Parks and local leaders.

Queen Elizabeth National Park hosted 28 parliamentary journalists from the Uganda Parliamentary Press Association (UPPA), 55 District Communication Officers from districts near the National Parks and other Protected Areas and 100 journalists from Northern Uganda who were hosted in Murchison Falls Conservation Area.

These sessions aimed to provide knowledge on conservation for accurate reporting and discussions, address Human-Wildlife Conflict, invasive species management, revenue sharing, sustainable tourism, climate change impacts, conservation financing and other community-related issues around the park. Additionally, the engagements sought to strengthen the relationship between UWA and communicators beyond the authority's immediate circles.

During the Murchison Falls Conservation Area (MFCA) engagement, the Ass. Commissioner Communications Bashir Hangi noted that the media is one of the key stakeholders UWA works with closely in the conservation journey and therefore its important to close the noted gaps in reporting about nature, through such interactions.

District Communication Officers welcomed at Queen Elizabeth National Park

"We realize as we work together, there are capacity gaps in nature reporting, instead of pointing figures, it's worth to build capacity to bring out silent issues beyond the story", he added.

In a related development, local leaders from Bukwo and Kween districts bordering Mt. Elgon National Park were hosted at Kibale National Park for a benchmarking tour designed to encourage a positive mindset toward coexistence between communities and wildlife near the park. During the recent visit, Senior Warden of Tourism Moses Turinawe, representing Chief Warden John Justice Tibesigwa, welcomed the Kween district leaders led by Kween LC5 Chairman Geoffrey Chelogoi. He explained how the Kibale Conservation Area collaborates closely with communities to conserve the park for everyone's benefit.

Turinawe highlighted UWA's community-centered strategies, including rapid conflict resolution, mitigation of problem animals, and revenue sharing. He noted that Kibale alone distributed over one billion shillings last year from revenue generated through activities such as chimpanzee habituation and tracking, guided nature walks, demonstrating how conservation can directly benefit local people.

Senior Warden for Forest Restoration, Richard Higenyi, shared the progress of Kibale's transformation under the UWA-FACE project. He explained that since the park was designated a National Park in 1993, about 7,180 hectares of forest cover have been restored out of a target of 10,000 hectares, by planting native trees. "All the trees you see today were planted thirty years ago by local communities who were employed," Higenyi remarked.

The group visited key sites such as Fire Summit, observed ecotourism initiatives, boardwalks, and trenches designed to protect crops from wildlife, and learned how carbon harvesting can generate income and improve community livelihoods.

Chairman Chelogoi praised the model, saying, "I'm impressed with what I see – UWA should continue these benchmarking tours so more people around the National Parks can learn from this example." He added that sustained efforts would protect both people and parks, representing a hopeful step toward ending decades of conflict between UWA and communities neighboring Mt. Elgon National Park.

Hangi is optimistic that after such engagements, more in-depth, informative, and objective stories will be written by the journalists, and realization of a positive mind change towards conservation for the communities boarding National Parks.

Kween local council leaders' visit at Kibale National park

UWA Stands with the Landslides Victims in Sebei Region

Handing over blankets to the Sebei people

The recent mudslides that swept through parts of Kapchorwa and Bukwo districts in the Sebei Sub-region in November left at least 10 people dead, several others missing, and many displaced - In response, as part of the Uganda Wildlife Authority's Corporate Responsibility, humanitarian support was extended to affected communities that were sheltered at Tulel Primary School in Tulel Subcounty, Bukwo District.

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The communities hardest hit by the disaster include Chesower, Tulel, Kamet, Longo, Mutchet, and Kortek sub counties—areas that suffered significant property damage and loss of life. These communities are neighbors around Mount Elgon National Park, a region prone to recurring landslides mainly due to deforestation and limited tree cover. The lack of sufficient vegetation weakens soil stability and allows excess surface water to build up pressure, triggering such tragic events.

In his condolence message,Mr. Sabila encouraged the affected communities to move past previous disagreements with UWA and collaborate to enhance conservation efforts, especially through reforestation, to prevent future disasters.

Hon. Chemutai Evelyn, the Woman Member of Parliament for Bukwo District thanked UWA for the prompt assistance. She noted that much of the land in the area is open and cultivated with crops like Irish potatoes and onions, making it vulnerable to erosion. She stressed that this tragedy should serve as a wake-up call for the community to plant more trees and adopt conservation as a sustainable solution.

Court Hands Poachers 7-Year and 3-Year Jail Terms

The Masindi Chief Magistrates' Court on 30th. October sentenced four poachers to custodial terms of seven years and three years, respectively, for illegal entry, hunting, and unlawful possession of wildlife products in Murchison Falls National Park.

His Worship Kosia Kasibayo convicted and sentenced Oyirwoth Albert and Odw oka Albert to seven years' imprisonment after they pleaded guilty to three counts of unlawful entry into a protected area, hunting, and unlawful possession of wildlife species and their products.

The dual was arrested on 19 October 2025 by UWA rangers from the Delta Marine Post in Kafundo area within Murchison Falls National Park, as they transported buffalo meat in two canoes. Upon their arrest, they voluntarily guided rangers to a place where five buffalo heads and additional meat were recovered.

In a related case, Oromcan Patrick and Ochendi Richard were convicted for illegal entry into Murchison Falls National Park and killing of a bushbuck upon their own guilty plea and sentenced to three years in jail.They were Arrested by rangers on 20 September 2025 from Kololo Ranger Post within Murchison Falls National Park. Delivering the sentence, His Worship Kasibayo noted that poaching remains prevalent and poses a serious threat to conservation and Uganda's tourism-driven economy.

She emphasized that the sentence is intended to deter similar actions and preserve the integrity of Uganda's national parks. State Prosecutor Shisa Alex told court that poaching undermines Uganda's conservation gains, deprives communities of tourism benefits, and robs future generations of wildlife heritage.

The defence counsel, Ajok Harriet, appealed for leniency towards the accused on grounds of youthfulness and potential for reform Uganda Wildlife Authority applauds the court's ruling and commends all those involved in securing the convictions. These sentences send a clear message that wildlife crime will not be tolerated. Illegal wildlife trade threatens animal populations and undermines conservation gains. We have strengthened surveillance, intelligence gathering, and law enforcement, and we urge the public to support efforts to protect wildlife and desist from illegal activities against nature.

Uganda Wildlife Authority remains committed to working with the justice system, security agencies, communities, and partners to eliminate poaching and safeguard Uganda's biodiversity for present and future generations.

UWA wraps up Year 2025 in animal print style

Board of Trustees group image

Animal prints of Leopards, Cheetahs, Zebras, Giraffes, Snakes, and many others combined to create a jungle-themed glamorous evening at the Uganda Wildlife Authority's end-of-year party held at Skyz Hotel in Kampala. The event also honored 20 retirees, who were acknowledged and awarded for their commitment and expertise throughout their service with UWA.

Dr. Basil Ajer who represented the Minister for Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities Rtn. Col Tom Butime commended UWA for its UWA Commended for Its Dedication and Professionalism in Protecting Wildlife, noting that UWA's efforts contribute significantly to wildlife conservation, tourism growth, community livelihoods, and environmental sustainability.

The Under Secretary, Mr. Geoffrey Sseremba, representing the Permanent Secretary Mrs. Katusiime Doreen noted several advancements in infrastructure and technology, including the deployment of advanced monitoring systems and drones, which have greatly strengthened anti-poaching initiatives.

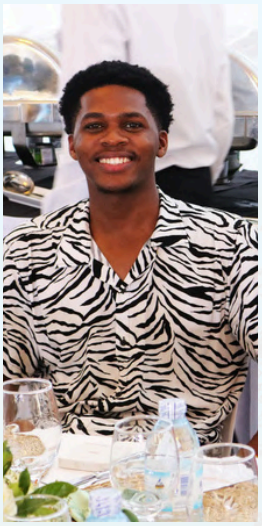
He encouraged UWA staff, as guardians of Uganda's natural wealth, to manage these resources with the transparency and dedication expected by the Ugandan people.

Dr. Basil handing over an accolade to one of the retirees

UWA Board Chairperson, Prof. James Kalema expressed gratitude to partners such as WWF, AWF, UTB, and allied agencies, including the UPDF and Uganda Police, for their collaboration in helping the Authority fulfill its mandate.

Dr. James Musinguzi the UWA Executive Director, reported significant progress, particularly in infrastructure development like constructing outposts and staff housing, though more accommodation is still needed. Looking ahead to 2026, Dr. Musinguzi emphasized the importance of staff training to enhance their performance.

The fashion world widely regards animal prints as a classic and adaptable element that goes beyond passing trends, frequently serving as a neutral pattern that brings boldness, confidence, and glamour to any look. In 2025, animal prints—particularly leopard, zebra, and snake patterns, made a striking and powerful return, dominating the runways. The Mirror lenses captured some of the remarkable outfits—it was **JUST A TOUCH .**



UWA FC: Promoting conservation wildlife through the beautiful game

As part of Uganda Wildlife Authority's innovative strategy to promote wildlife conservation through sports, the Authority established a football club "UWA FC" using the power of football to engage communities and inspire conservation awareness.

The club currently competes in the third tier of Uganda's football hierarchy under the Federation of Uganda Football Associations (FUFA), featuring in the Buganda Region League. Despite being relatively young in competitive football, UWA FC has already made a strong impression, positioning itself among the top two teams as the 2025–26 league campaign continues.

What began as a conservation-driven initiative has rapidly transformed into a serious football project. UWA FC now stands among the top two clubs in the Buganda Region League, with promotion to the second division firmly within reach as the season progresses.

UWA FC plays its home matches at Namulonge Playground along Busika Road, a growing hub where football meets conservation advocacy. Each matchday provides a platform to engage communities, raise awareness about wildlife protection, and demonstrate how sport can positively influence attitudes toward conservation—reinforcing UWA's commitment to protecting Uganda's natural heritage beyond park boundaries.

Kiplimo Secures Historic third World Cross Country Title

Uganda Wildlife Authority athlete Sgt. Jacob Kiplimo delivered another landmark performance by winning the senior men's race for a third consecutive time at the World Athletics Cross Country Championships Tallahassee 26, held on Saturday, 10th January.

Kiplimo dominated a world-class field to finish ahead of Ethiopia's Berihu Aregawi, reinforcing his standing among the leading distance runners of his generation. His decisive move came on the final lap, where he created a commanding 18-second advantage over the rest of the podium contenders.

He crossed the finish line in 28:18, becoming only the fourth athlete in history to secure three successive world cross-country titles, equalling achievements previously recorded by John Ngugi, Paul Tergat, and Kenenisa Bekele. The performance also represented the largest winning margin in the senior men's event since 2007.

Kiplimo's achievement reflects the Uganda Wildlife Authority's continued investment in sport as a strategic platform for promoting national values and international visibility. His success on the global stage reinforces UWA's broader mandate of conservation advocacy through sport demonstrating how elite performance can effectively carry messages of environmental responsibility and sustainable heritage protection.

UWA Darts Club Targets National Title Comeback

Uganda Wildlife Authority Darts Club, popularly known as the Baboons, is mounting a determined campaign to reclaim the National Championship title in the ongoing National Darts League, following a second-place finish last season.

With UPDF lifting the trophy in the previous campaign, UWA DC enters the 2025–26 season with renewed focus and ambition. After 10 matches, the Baboons have accumulated 24 points and currently sit third on the Kampala Zone league table, behind UPDF and UCI.

Interesting Facts About Rhinos

- There are five species of rhino. Only the white and black rhino live in Africa while the other three live in Asia.
- The largest of the five species is the white rhino.
- White rhinos are the second largest land mammal, after the African elephant.
- They don't eat meat – they are herbivores.
- White rhinos love to get muddy – it protects their skin from getting sunburns and also acts as an insect repellent.
- Female white rhinos are called cows and males are called bulls.
- White rhinos are social and live in a group called a crash.
- Approximately 26,700–27,000 rhinoceroses remain in the wild across Africa and Asia.

P.O. Box: 3530, Kampala

Plot 7 Kira Road, Kamwokya