

THE WILDLIFE MIRROR

Keeping you informed

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NEW: **LOW SEASON** PERMITS

April, May and November

Activity	Foreign Non Residents FNR (USD)	Residents (USD)
Gorilla Tracking	600	500
Chimpanzee Tracking	200	150



EDITOR

From the Editor's Desk

Hangi Bashir

Ass. Commissioner Communications

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the 8th issue of The Wildlife Mirror, a publication that continues to tell Uganda Wildlife Authority's conservation story through the people, places, partnerships and milestones that shape our work.

This edition comes at a significant moment for conservation in Uganda. The confirmation of 426 chimpanzees in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park is not only a scientific achievement, but also a powerful reminder of the value of sustained protection, research and habitat management. It affirms that Uganda's protected areas remain critical strongholds for biodiversity and ecological resilience.

In this issue, we also highlight major developments across the conservation landscape, including the continued strengthening of rhino conservation, the advancement of landscape restoration and carbon initiatives, enhanced wildlife crime response, school conservation competitions, wildlife rescues and releases, and partnerships that are helping UWA deliver more effectively on its mandate.

We further celebrate the role of communities, women, media, wardens, researchers and conservation partners whose contribution continues to deepen public understanding and support for wildlife conservation. Their stories remind us that conservation is not the work of one institution alone; it is a shared national responsibility.

As Uganda continues to position itself as a leading nature and wildlife destination, UWA remains committed to protecting wildlife resources, promoting responsible tourism, supporting communities around protected areas, and building a conservation culture that will serve present and future generations.

We thank you for reading The Wildlife Mirror and invite you to continue walking this conservation journey with us.



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Census Confirmed 426 Chimpanzees in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park



The 2025 Bwindi Chimpanzee Census confirmed the presence of an estimated 426 chimpanzees now widely distributed across Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, marking a major milestone in strengthening evidence-based conservation in one of Africa’s most important protected landscapes.

The results were officially launched today by the Minister of State for Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, Hon. Martin Mugarra Bahinduka, at Uganda Wildlife Authority Headquarters in Kampala.

Speaking at the launch, Hon. Muggara emphasized the importance of science-led conservation. “The confirmation of a substantial and widely distributed chimpanzee population in Bwindi strengthens our understanding of the park as a critical habitat for great apes and reinforces the need to manage protected areas using sound scientific data, particularly in the face of climate change, habitat

pressure, and growing demand for land and resources,” he said.



Minister Martin Muggara Launches the report at UWA headquarters

A UNESCO World Heritage Site internationally recognized for its mountain gorillas, Bwindi has

long been a global model for great ape conservation. This first dedicated and systematic chimpanzee census significantly expands scientific understanding of Bwindi's great ape community and formally integrates chimpanzees into park-wide conservation planning alongside gorillas.

Conducted between May and June 2025, the census was led by the Jane Goodall Institute (JGI) Uganda in partnership with Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and the Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration (GVTC), and implemented alongside the park's sixth mountain gorilla census.

Using standardized line-transect survey methods, including Standing Crop Nest Count and Marked Nest Count approaches, researchers surveyed 320.9 square kilometres across all four park sectors Buhoma, Ruhija, Nkuringo, and Rushaga generating the first robust, site-specific baseline on chimpanzee population size, density, and distribution - Findings confirm that chimpanzees are widely distributed throughout the park, occupying habitats ranging from mixed Afromontane forest to higher-elevation montane ecosystems.

Under conservative modelling assumptions, the census estimated an average density of 1.33 chimpanzees per square kilometre, challenging earlier assumptions that the species was rare or confined to marginal areas.

The census recorded minimal signs of human disturbance, indicating that the habitat remains largely intact and effectively protected. Observations of other large mammals, including mountain gorillas and forest elephants, as well as additional primate species and vegetation characteristics, were documented, providing valuable context for integrated, multi-species conservation planning.

Commenting on the findings, Dr. James Musinguzi, Executive Director of UWA, said the census provides a strong scientific foundation for conservation decision-making. "For the first time, we have clear scientific evidence confirming a substantial and widely distributed chimpanzee population within Bwindi. This strengthens our ability to plan, protect, and manage the park using evidence-based approaches, while ensuring that chimpanzees receive conservation attention alongside other great apes,



UWA ED delivers his speech during the launch

” he said.

The Executive Director of JGI Uganda, Mr. James Byamukama, noted that the census addresses long-standing knowledge gaps. “The evidence confirms that chimpanzees are not a marginal presence but an integral component of Bwindi’s ecosystem. This baseline will guide conservation planning, protected area management, and regional biodiversity strategies, while supporting Uganda’s international conservation commitments,” he said.

The Bwindi Chimpanzee Census operationalizes Uganda’s National Chimpanzee Conservation Strategy (2023/24–2032/33) by providing site-specific, scientifically robust population data to support evidence-based implementation of the Strategy, strengthen monitoring of population trends and habitat integrity, guide targeted law enforcement, and align conservation investments with priority chimpanzee landscapes.



Uganda Wildlife Authority Rewrites History as Rhinos Return to Kidepo Valley National Park

Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) made history when it reintroduced Rhinos back to Kidepo Valley National Park, marking a historic milestone after 43 years, when the last rhino was sighted in the area.

Speaking during the flag-off ceremony of the first two Southern White Rhinos from Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary to Kidepo Valley National Park, the Executive Director of Uganda Wildlife Authority Dr. James Musinguzi described the exercise as a major milestone in Uganda's conservation journey. A total of eight rhinos will be taken to the park.

“This moment marks the beginning of a new rhino story for Kidepo Valley National Park. The translocation of these rhinos is the first step in restoring a species that once formed part of the park's natural heritage. Over time, additional rhinos will be introduced to gradually rebuild a viable and thriving rhino population in Kidepo.”

Dr. Musinguzi noted that the exercise is aligned with the National Rhino Conservation Strategy for Uganda, which provides the national framework for restoring rhino populations within their historical range and

strengthening long-term rhino conservation efforts in the country.

He further explained that the exercise is also informed by the feasibility study for rhino reintroduction into the wild undertaken by Uganda Wildlife Authority, which assessed suitable habitats, ecological requirements, and security conditions for restoring rhinos to protected areas in Uganda. The study identified Kidepo Valley National Park as one of the most suitable locations for reintroducing rhinos into the wild.

Extensive ground work has been undertaken by partners to prepare Kidepo Valley National Park for the return of the species. Preparations include the establishment of a secure rhino sanctuary supported by perimeter fencing, access roads, firebreaks, ranger facilities, water infrastructure, and monitoring systems to ensure effective protection and management of the animals.

Dr. Musinguzi expressed appreciation to conservation partners whose collaboration has made the reintroduction possible. “We are deeply grateful to our conservation partners whose

technical expertise, financial support, and logistical contributions have made this milestone possible. The return of rhinos to Kidepo demonstrates the power of partnerships in restoring species and protecting Uganda's wildlife heritage."

The Commissioner for Biodiversity Management, Mr. John Makombo, emphasized the ecological and operational significance of the reintroduction, noting that the return of rhinos to Kidepo is a critical step in restoring the park's ecological completeness.

"Kidepo Valley National Park is one of Uganda's most intact savannah ecosystems, and the reintroduction of Southern White Rhinos restores a key component of that ecosystem. This reintroduction strengthens not only species recovery but also ecosystem integrity and resilience", he said.

The rhino reintroduction is supported by Wild Landscapes East Africa (WLEA), Northern Range Lands Trust (NRT) and Uganda Conservation Foundation (UCF). These partners have supported sanctuary development, infrastructure preparation, equipment provision, and logistical planning necessary for the successful translocation and longterm protection of the rhinos.

Upon arrival in Kidepo Valley National Park, the rhinos were initially placed in a secure sanctuary within the park where they will be closely

monitored by trained rangers and veterinary teams to ensure their successful adaptation to the environment.

Rhinos once roamed widely across the Kidepo Valley ecosystem. However, due to intense poaching and insecurity during the late 1970s and early 1980s, the species was wiped out from the area. The last rhino in Kidepo Valley National Park was killed in Narus Valley in 1983, marking the end of their presence in the park for more than four decades.

Uganda's rhino recovery journey began in 2005, when a breeding programme was established at Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary after the species became extinct in the wild in Uganda. The success recorded at Ziwa and the importation of an additional eight rhinos from South Africa late last year have enabled the gradual expansion of rhino restoration efforts to other suitable habitats within the country. Currently, Uganda has 61 rhinos.

The return of rhinos to Kidepo Valley National Park is expected to strengthen biodiversity conservation, enhance the park's tourism potential, and contribute to Uganda's broader efforts to restore endangered wildlife species within their historic ecosystems.



UWA ED Flags off trucks carrying rhinos to Kidepo

KVCA Advances with Support from the EU NaturAfrica Kidepo-Turkana Landscape Project



UWA Commissioner Field Operations, Charles Tumwesigye receives a from the CEO NRT Shaval Shah

Kidepo Valley National Park is undergoing significant changes as new initiatives take shape. This progress follows the launch of the EU NaturAfrica Landscape Project, which focuses on addressing human-wildlife conflicts and promoting coexistence. The project highlights the importance of conservancies in enhancing both livelihoods and conservation efforts, while encouraging collaboration among local communities, governments, and donors.

During the project launch, several key developments were introduced, including the handover of the Joint Operations Command Centre (JOCC) at the Kidepo Valley Conservation Area Headquarters. This center aims to integrate communication and operational management within the park and surrounding community conservancies. Additionally, six motorcycles were provided to the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), National Forest Authority (NFA), and Morungole Community Conservancy to aid in project monitoring. The Rhino Sanctuary was also unveiled, paving the way for the reintroduction of rhinos to the area, that had not been seen there since 1982 - Kidepo is set to receive both Southern and Eastern Black Rhinos, which is expected to enhance the park's tourism appeal.

UWA Commissioner Field Operations, Charles

Tumwesigye, representing Executive Director Dr. James Musinguzi, expressed gratitude to all stakeholders and partners involved, including the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) as the project lead, Uganda Conservation Foundation (UCF), National Forest Authority (NFA), Kenya Wildlife Research & Training Institute (WRTI), and the Morungole Community.

He pledged that UWA will continue collaborating closely with these partners to ensure the project effectively addresses wildlife-related challenges and improves local livelihoods. He emphasized, "Together, we can transform conflict into coexistence and prosperity."

Northern Rangelands Trust CEO Shaval Shah praised the collaborative spirit, stating, "No one can manage this complex project alone—our combined efforts will create secure futures." He highlighted that conservancies empower local communities while safeguarding wildlife and expressed optimism that the Rhino Sanctuary could successfully breed 100 rhinos within 20 years following their reintroduction.

The project launch marks a unified commitment to advancing conservation efforts alongside economic development in the region.

Kibale Forest Carbon Project on the move - A Model for Forest Restoration and Economic Revitalization

Every 21st March, the world marks International Day of Forests. This year's theme; Forests and Economies highlighted the role of forests in supporting livelihoods and generating economic opportunities across sectors. The theme aligned well with the Kibale forest restoration program that is making a significant impact by transforming lives and boosting Uganda's economy through its carbon absorption efforts.



Chief Warden Kibale Conservation Area John Justice Tibesigwa takes part in the Carbon data collection exercise

Kibale National Park, known as the “Primate Capital of the World,” spans about 71.5 square kilometers of restored forest. This forest not only helps combat global warming but also plays a crucial role in improving the livelihoods of people living near the park.

Planted in the last 30 years, the forest now absorbs 1.5 million tons of carbon, benefiting local communities involved in its restoration. Senior Warden Forest Restoration, Richard Kigenyi, expresses confidence that the ongoing carbon data collection will yield positive results, noting an average increase of over 200,000 tons every three years.

John Justine Tibesigwa, the Chief Warden of Kibale Conservation Area, states: "The forest restoration project in Kibale is one of the best in Africa, delivering enormous benefits to the neighboring communities and ultimately enhancing the conservation of the park."

Supported by the forest restoration project led by the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and partners such as Face-the-Future, Prima Klima, and local communities, the carbon absorption initiative generates revenue from carbon credit sales that positively impacts lives.

This income supports community projects like beekeeping, pig farming, and goat rearing, enabling

residents to develop sustainable livelihoods without harming the forest. More than 200 community members are employed seasonally in activities such as tree planting, seed collection, nursery management, and caring for native seedlings, while over 140 have permanent jobs.

The project has also provided 5,000-liter water tanks to improve access to clean water for households, reducing the need for risky trips into the park to collect water from natural sources. Additionally, a five-kilometer trench was built to prevent elephants from damaging crops on nearby farms, helping to reduce conflicts between the community and the park

A carbon market is a non-physical marketplace where carbon credits are bought and sold. These markets come in two types: compliance markets, which are government-mandated trading systems, and voluntary carbon markets (VCMs), where companies and individuals can purchase carbon credits to offset their emissions voluntarily.

Carbon credits are tradable permits or certificates that represent the right to emit one metric ton of carbon dioxide (CO₂) or an equivalent amount of other greenhouse gases (GHGs). They are essential tools for reducing emissions and can be generated through projects that avoid emissions, such as renewable energy and forest conservation, or through removal projects like reforestation and carbon capture and storage.



Cabinet Minister of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities Hon. Tom Butime welcomes Prime Minister Robinah Nabanja at the WWD Celebrations in Entebbe

President Museveni Urges Strengthened Interventions to Address Climate Change Risks

President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni emphasized the importance of addressing the emerging threats and challenges posed by climate change to identify effective interventions.

In a speech delivered on his behalf by the Prime Minister Hon. Robinah Nabanja, as Uganda joined the global community in observing World Wildlife Day in Entebbe Municipality, President Museveni highlighted that the world is currently confronting unprecedented issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation, habitat destruction, and pollution.

These challenges continue to disrupt weather patterns, leading to extreme heatwaves, floods, and landslides, which threaten ecosystems. Therefore, raising awareness about the value of preserving Uganda's natural resources is crucial, as they play a significant role in mitigating the effects of climate change.

The President also pointed out that Uganda is experiencing environmental degradation caused by uncoordinated and unplanned development, population growth, deforestation, agricultural expansion, and pollution. This has led to a decline in forest cover from 24% in 1990 to about 13%, and wetland cover has decreased from 15.5% in 1994 to 8.9% by 2020.

He expressed his appreciation for the Minister of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities for organizing the event to raise awareness, stating, "This event offers a chance to renew our commitment to sustaining the earth's life and diverse wildlife populations. This year's World Wildlife Day theme, 'Medicinal and Aromatic Plants: Conserving Health, Heritage, and Livelihoods,' is very relevant. It reminds us that wildlife conservation includes not only animals but also plants that sustain ecosystems, support health systems, preserve cultural traditions, and provide livelihoods for many Ugandans. It calls on all of us to work together to protect and conserve medicinal and aromatic plants for our survival."

President Museveni added that the government will continue to identify and improve wildlife conservation areas in line with its constitutional duty under Article 237(2)(b), which requires the government to hold in trust for the people of Uganda and protect natural lakes, rivers, wetlands, forests, game reserves, national parks, and any land reserved for ecological and tourism purposes for the benefit of all Ugandans.

The Cabinet Minister for Tourism, Wildlife, and Antiquities, Hon. Tom Butime, stated that the 2026 World Wildlife Day theme resonates deeply because medicinal plants are integral to people's culture and

heritage. He noted that these plants form the basis of many traditional healthcare systems, contribute to modern medicine, and support various industries, including cosmetics. For generations, people worldwide have relied on nature for nutrition, and even today in Uganda, more than two-thirds of the population depend on traditional medicine as a primary or complementary health resource, from the villages of Karamoja to the islands of Lake Victoria.

He however, pointed out that more than 20% of the world's medicinal and aromatic plant species are at risk of extinction according to the IUCN Red List, highlighting the urgent global need for their conservation. He further stated that the loss of a medicinal plant represents not just the disappearance of a species, but also the loss of valuable knowledge, economic opportunities, and future potential, emphasizing that raising awareness, improving regulations, and ensuring sustainable harvesting and trade practices are crucial for the survival of these precious plant resources in their natural habitats.

Dr. James Musinguzi, Executive Director of the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), mentioned that Uganda's network of protected areas encompasses a significant portion, nearly 10%, of the country's land surface, thereby protecting vital ecosystems that support tourism, regulate the climate, safeguard water sources, and sustain local communities.

He reiterated that wildlife conservation is therefore fundamental to national stability and economic advancement, rather than being a secondary concern. Dr. Musinguzi added that UWA remains committed to investing in efforts such as ecosystem restoration, managing invasive species, and conducting scientific monitoring to ensure that conservation strategies are informed by robust data.

The celebration of World Wildlife Day, observed annually on March 3rd, was preceded by various activities, including;



Prime Minister Robinah Nabbanja poses for photo with the UWA canine team, UWA ED and State Minister for Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities

The World Wildlife Conservation Competitions for schools



St. Mary's College Lugazi Takes Trophy for the Secondary Schools Category



Gilgal Primary School – Winners of the Primary Schools Category

These were organized by Uganda Wildlife Authority, in collaboration with the Wildlife Clubs of Uganda. They drew participation from eighteen educational institutions, including eight primary schools, seven secondary schools, and three universities. The Schools competed in different disciplines which included; quizzes, poetry, music, dance, drama, and fine art, all aligned with this year's theme, "Medicinal and Aromatic Plants: Conserving Health, Heritage and Livelihoods."

The National World Wildlife Conference that was on February 26, with emphasis on the need to protect and sustainably utilize Uganda's medicinal plants to support healthcare, livelihoods, and biodiversity conservation.



UWA Board Chairperson Prof. James Kalema delivering his presentation during the conference

The 3rd Edition of the Conservation Media Awards



Winners of the 2025 Conservation media awards

These were held at Protea Hotel in Kololo, Kampala, and Uganda Wildlife Authority in partnership with Wild Aid, recognized journalists for their outstanding contributions to conservation reporting for the year 2025.

The awards were graced by the State Minister of

Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities on. Martin Mugarra who praised the journalists for their relentless efforts in sharing impactful conservation stories and expressed gratitude to supporting partners and urged other stakeholders to join in backing the media to continue highlighting stories of resilience and innovation within the conservation sector.



Minister Awards UBC's Sarah Maweleere



The Uganda Wildlife Half Marathon 2026



Under theme Raising Funds to Educate Children of the Fallen Rangers, hundreds graced the the 8th edition of the Uganda Wildlife Half Marathon held at Kitante Primary School on the 1st.March. 2026. Flagged off by the Cabinet Minister for Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities, the runners took on 21km, 10km, and 5km races along various routes within Kampala, starting and finishing at Kitante Primary School.



Rt. Hon. Rtd. Col. Tom Butime, Minister of Tourism, flags off the marathon.



Spice Diana entertains runners at the marathon



UWA ED, Dr. James Musinguzi, joins participants during the marathon run.



Marathon participants take part in pre-race aerobics ahead of the marathon.

UWA Women Called on to Strike a Balance Between Career and Gender Roles



ED with Ladies cutting cake

UWA women have been reminded of their gender roles and the importance of balancing these with their careers to become influential leaders worldwide.

Dr. Joyce Nalunga Birimumaaso, a prominent Ugandan lawyer, transformational leader, and motivational speaker, made these remarks as a key note speaker during the UWA International Women's Day Celebrations held at the Authority Headquarters in Kamwokya, Kampala. She emphasized the importance of humility and inclusiveness in leadership, highlighting that women are regarded as role models who shape character and discipline.

She stated, "The future is female. The future is bold. That's why His Excellency has appointed many women to high-ranking positions. When you believe in yourself, others will believe in you. When you doubt yourself, people can sense it. If you don't value yourself, who else will? Confidence in yourself will be visible to everyone."

Dr. Nalunga also discouraged the "pull-down syndrome," where women undermine other women's progress, urging women to support one another to reach

their full potential. She reminded them that in the professional world, there are no excuses and encouraged them to be results-oriented and add value to their organization.

UWA Executive Director Dr James Musinguzi who briefly stepped to celebrate with the ladies in an evening they dubbed as UWA Women's Day – Ka-Chai Fire Side Chat, encouraging women to pursue further education to better compete with their male counterparts in the job market, emphasizing that once empowered, women can compete equally with men in various fields.

UWA Commissioner Human Resources, Susan Muhumuza Nyatia, highlighted the importance of gender equality in leadership roles and motivated women to strive for higher positions. Additionally, Dr. Ahebwa Keisha Patience, a mental health and wellness consultant at Thrive Therapy and Wellness, advised women to prioritize self-care and establish boundaries, reassuring them that it is acceptable to say *no* when feeling overwhelmed.

UWA Holds Its 1st Ever African Grey Parrot Conservation Symposium

UWA held its first ever African Grey Parrot symposium to evaluate the Save the African Grey Parrot project, which has been ongoing since 2021 and is expected to conclude in May 2026.

UWA through UWEC – CA partnered with Chubu University and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in 2017 and rolled out this project to raise community awareness, foster anti-poaching activities, and do reforestation efforts in communities with key habitats for the endangered African Grey Parrot, all aiming at creating a sustainable model in which both people and parrots can thrive.

The project, which prioritized communities, began activities on Koome and Busi Islands by working with local leaders and organized groups. These groups participated in various capacity-building trainings and workshops, including practical skills in craft making as an alternative livelihood. This approach aimed to lessen the pressure on the forest, .

which is the main habitat of the African Grey Parrot.

At the opening of the symposium at Admas Grand Hotel – Entebbe, UWA Executive Director Dr. James Musinguzi re-emphasized the importance of involving local leaders in conservation efforts, especially in areas where the species holds cultural significance, such as being regarded as totem symbols.

Beyond active community involvement in conservation and ecotourism, the project has achieved several successes. These include increased awareness of environmental conservation, development of infrastructure supporting the welfare of African Grey Parrots and broader conservation initiatives, staff training programs that featured international exchanges, and notably, the release of parrots from UWEC – Entebbe Zoo into Kibale National Park and Ngamba Island.



JICA team takes a photo with UWA ED (centre)

David Musingo, UWA Commissioner Community Conservation and Ex-Situ Wildlife Services and the project coordinator, explains that the project aims to establish a “Ugandan Model for African Grey Parrot Conservation.” This model combines science-based conservation and monitoring, habitat restoration focused on native food tree species, and enhanced community participation programs.

The goal of this model is to ensure the long-term survival of African Grey Parrots in Uganda and to

The goal of this model is to ensure the long-term survival of African Grey Parrots in Uganda and to provide a replicable framework that can be applied in other African countries facing similar conservation challenges.

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Zingoola Parrot Conservation community with JICA and UWA officials



Wild Defense Inc. Strengthens UWA Staff's Expertise in Wildlife Crime and Forensic Methods



Wildlife Defense Inc. (USA), hands over equipment to UWA staff

In partnership with Wildlife Defense Inc. (USA), Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) held a three-day training session to equip its staff with forensic techniques, investigative skills, and crime scene management knowledge to enhance wildlife law enforcement and combat wildlife crime.

Thirty-one UWA personnel from the Law Enforcement and Prosecution divisions, within the Murchison Falls Conservation Area (MFCA), took part in the training held at Lugaya Training Academy from January 10th to 12th, 2026.

The Wild Defense Inc. team, led by co-founder and lead instructor Jesse Paluch, donated essential equipment for field use, including binoculars, hydraulic bags, handcuffs, first aid kits, crime scene kits, Canon DSLR cameras, GPS devices, and compasses.

Following the training, Jesse Paluch recommended regular refresher courses to rangers,

development of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for managing wildlife crime scenes, incorporation of courtroom testimony training into ranger development to improve prosecution success, promotion of collaboration among police, judiciary, and intelligence agencies for comprehensive wildlife crime management, creation of a specialized wildlife forensic unit within UWA to consolidate expertise and resources, and the continuation of partnerships with international organizations like Wildlife Defense for ongoing technical support.

Fredrick Kiiza Kayanja, Chief Warden of Murchison Falls Conservation Area, emphasized that the collaboration between UWA and Wildlife Defense Inc. highlights the value of international partnerships in bolstering Uganda's efforts against wildlife crime. He added that sustained investment in training, equipment, and inter-agency cooperation will greatly improve wildlife protection and prosecution results.

UWA Receives Equipment from WCS to Fight Wildlife Crime

Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), with support from the Bureau of International Operations and Law Enforcement Affairs, donated equipment this morning to the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA). This donation aims to strengthen the Authority's capacity to enhance law enforcement and intelligence efforts to fight wildlife crime.

The equipment delivered includes one Lenovo all-in-one PC, Lenovo laptops and accessories, two Honda motorcycles, 16,809 educational and awareness materials, and several other items yet to be installed and delivered. The additional items include thirty-five smartphones and waist bags, solar units for ranger outposts, and fuel cards for the two motorcycles.

Delivering the consignment at UWA offices in Kamwokya, Kampala, the Country Director of WCS, Dr. Takozekibi Nampindo, stated that the project, which is part of the Countering Wildlife Crime in the Transfrontier

Conservation Area of Uganda initiative, aims to reduce poaching and wildlife trafficking within the Queen Elizabeth Conservation Area. This will be achieved by enhancing UWA's capacity to coordinate responses at both park and national levels, as well as improving the use of high-quality data sharing and analysis to combat wildlife crime.

UWA Executive Director Dr. James Musinguzi praised WCS for their practical support in conservation efforts and promised to ensure the donation is effectively used to combat the ongoing challenge of wildlife crime.

The project, which will run until September 2026, will also provide training on Earth Ranger integration with SMART and OWADAT systems (for patrol data collection), facilitate deployment, raise community awareness about the benefits of the park and the threats posed by poaching, and support conservation education and awareness training.



UWA ED Dr. James Musinguzi receives some of the equipment from WCS Country Director Dr. Nampindo

Cracking Down on Wildlife Crime

In a significant effort to combat wildlife crime, Uganda Wildlife Authorities (UWA) continues to intensify its crackdown on illegal activities to protect the country's biodiversity.

In a period of one month between 22nd February and 22nd March 2026, the authority, working alongside partner agencies; police and the Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF), successfully arrested seven individuals, seized 260 kilograms of elephant ivory and 14.5 kilograms of pangolin scales.

On February 22, 2026, a joint operation between UWA and the Uganda Police Force apprehended Francis Opio in Nwoya district while he was in possession of ten pieces of raw elephant tusks that weighted to 154 Kilograms.

On March 21, 2026, the same collaborative effort resulted in the arrest of five people in Bukedea district, along with 106 kilograms of raw elephant ivory. Those arrested included Acipa Deborah (40), a businesswoman; Okwatum Stephen (43), a driver; Ojangole Godfrey (35), a teacher from Kampala; Arapa Julius (28), a businessman; and Adwaru Simon (38). Four of them live in Bukedea District, while one is from Serere District.

Additionally, on March 22, a 36-year-old man named Okech Philip Jonathan was caught during a crackdown operation by UWA and UPDF as he transported 14.5 kilograms of pangolin scales on a motorcycle (bodaboda) to Karuma Centre for sale.

Margret Kasumba, Assistant Commissioner for Law Enforcement and head of the wildlife crime unit at UWA, commends the collaborative efforts of the enforcement teams and partners involved, saying this is a vital move toward breaking up illegal wildlife trafficking networks.

Dr. James Musinguzi, Executive Director of Uganda Wildlife Authority, says the arrests demonstrate Uganda's firm stance against wildlife crime. "These



Seized Ivory

seizures send a clear and firm message that Uganda will not tolerate wildlife crime - Ivory trafficking is a serious offense that threatens our elephant populations, undermines conservation gains, and fuels organized criminal networks operating across borders."

Dr. Musinguzi emphasized the role of intelligence-led enforcement and inter-agency coordination, noting that the success of such operations reflect the strength of intelligence - driven enforcement and close coordination between Uganda Wildlife Authority and security agencies.

"We remain fully committed to dismantling wildlife trafficking networks wherever they operate." He warned traffickers that enforcement efforts are being intensified nationwide.

OUR RESCUES AND RELEASES



Rescued Elephant

Between January and March 2026, pangolins and elephants were the most frequently rescued animals. Out of 28 animals rescued during this three-month period, eight pangolins of various species were saved from different locations including Kibale National Park, Queen Elizabeth Conservation Area, Katonga Wildlife Reserve, and Rwibale Health Centre in Kyenjojo District.

Similarly, eight elephants were rescued, one of which was relocated from Bukatu village in Mpanga parish, Kamwenge District back to Kibale National Park after wandering in the community for five months. Many of these elephants rescued had been victims of wire snares in Queen Elizabeth National Park.

Among birds, Grey Crowned Cranes were the most commonly rescued, along with other species such as herons.

In Busiika, Luwero district, a baboon was rescued from a mosque after community members and police raised an alert. The baboon had entered the mosque during prayer time, causing those gathered to flee. The baboon was then relocated to Murchison Falls National Park, where it is being closely monitored for health.

On Buvuma Island, in Bugaya Sub-county, a 3.87-meter-long female

crocodile was captured and rescued. This crocodile was suspected of killing a fisherman on Christmas Eve in the fishing village of Zzinga. Following the rescue, the team educated local residents on safe practices when using the lake to minimize the risk of crocodile attacks and emphasized the importance of wildlife conservation. The crocodile was relocated to Karuma Wildlife Reserve in the Murchison Falls Conservation Area.

A shoebill was also rescued in the Murchison Falls Conservation Area, with the story featured in the New Vision publication :

https://www.newvision.co.ug/category/travel/uganda-wildlife-authority-rescues-shoebill-fr-NV_229748_032026



Rescued Baboon



Rescued Pangolin

UWA's 21st Wardens' Assembly Emphasized Conservation And Integrity



UWA ED Dr. James Musinguzi delivers his speech at the wardens' assembly

The 21st Warden's Assembly, held under the theme "Protecting and Consolidating Conservation Gains," was attended by UWA officers from various Conservation Areas. This was the first assembly following the RAPEX exercise, which merged UWA and UWEC. In his opening remarks, UWA Executive Director Dr. James Musinguzi expressed gratitude to the UWA board and the Human Resources division for successfully completing RAPEX. He also mentioned that a structural review is still underway, which will create more opportunities and space for growth.

Dr. Musinguzi emphasized the importance of zero tolerance towards poaching and corruption, warning staff to avoid falling victim to these issues.

UWA Board Chairperson Prof. James Kalema, aligned his remarks with the theme. He highlighted UWA's achievements, including the recovery of wildlife

populations, diversification of tourism products, increased visitor numbers, the establishment of satellite zoos such as the Mbale Zoo, the development of a new strategic plan for 2025/2026 to 2030/2031, and the maintenance of peace and security in Protected Areas through tools like Earth Ranger and drones. He also noted improvements in staff welfare, including better accommodation in some Conservation Areas, enhanced community involvement and participation, extensive partnerships at both national and international levels, and the government's confidence in UWA, which has led to the authority being entrusted with additional estates.

However, Prof. Kalema acknowledged that despite UWA's significant efforts in safeguarding conservation gains, certain challenges remain. He pointed out the decline in some wildlife populations, such as hyenas and leopards, as well as the neglect of important species like insects and some plants.



Former Chief Warden BMCA Mr. Nelson Guma joined by UWA Management in cutting a cake

The assembly also recognized some long-serving officers, including Commissioner of Biodiversity and Wildlife Management John Makombo and Commissioner of Field Operations Charles Tumwesigye. The two joined Mr. Nelson Gum, the former Chief Warden of Bwindi-Mgahinga Conservation Area, to cut a cake as he bid farewell to the authority following his retirement.

The staff participated in several team building activities designed to enhance their communication skills, boost morale, encourage innovation, and increase productivity by strengthening interpersonal relationships and aligning employees with the company culture.



Tag of War



Brick game

Interesting Facts About Elephants

- Uganda hosts the larger Savanna elephant (found in national parks) and the smaller, shier Forest elephant (found in Kibale, Bwindi, and Semuliki).
- A single mature elephant consumes $\backslash(250 - 350\backslash)$ kg of vegetation and requires $\backslash(110 - 190\backslash)$ liters of water per day.
- They are known to show compassion, mourning their dead, and they use, and often break, branches to mark territory.
- They can live for $\backslash(60 - 70\backslash)$ years and have a 22-month gestation period.





UWA
*Conserving
for Generations*

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