

# THE Naturalist

NEWSLETTER FOR NATURE LOVERS

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Nature Uganda



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# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE



Dear Member,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the 27th volume of NatureUganda's newsletter – the Naturalist. I extend my gratitude for your continued support and contribution to conservation work in Uganda.

On behalf, of the Executive Committee, I also want to appreciate the NatureUganda teams at the secretariat and field offices in Kabale and Rubirizi/Bushenyi who are at the frontline of our strategic plan implementation. And to you members for continued support through membership renewal and active participation at the Public talk and other upcoming events.

The first quarter of 2018 has been challenging with some major outcomes; we have conducted bird monitoring research in the East, West and Northern parts of the country, hosted over 150 guests at a public lecture on world wetlands Day celebrations and organized a districts biodiversity mainstreaming workshop for Kisoro and Rubanda, and concluded our Annual Operation Plan for 2018 among other activities.

In this issue, we highlight conservation successes of some projects including

the extension of Nabugabo Ramsar site and the promotion of Crane custodianship. We also bring you updates about the nationwide bird monitoring, community feedback meetings organized in Eastern Uganda, visits from our international partners and organizational planning meeting.



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For the subsequent months, we will hold our monthly public talks, nature walks and periodic excursions. To take part in any of our activities, visit our website ([www.natureuganda.org](http://www.natureuganda.org)) or the secretariat for more information. You can also send us an email to [membership@natureuganda.org](mailto:membership@natureuganda.org) or find us on social media– Nature Uganda.

I implore those who have not yet renewed their membership to do so through our membership office ASAP to help continue promoting the understanding, appreciation and conservation of nature in Uganda.

Good reading!

**Dr Robert Nabanyumya,**  
Chairman, Executive Committee



## World Wetlands Day celebrations

NatureUganda together with the Wetlands Management Department from the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) organized a Public lecture at the Uganda Museum to celebrate International World Wetlands Day 2018 under the theme "Prized land not Wasteland."

The lecture was open to the general public with a key note address delivered by Mr. Paul Mafabi the Director Environment Affairs at MWE. Some of the guests present included Dr. Paul Kawanga Ssemogerere – former Democratic Party president and political veteran, Mr. Matia Lwanga - Chairman Wakiso District and Ms Clare Namanda from Kampala Capital City Authority. The lecture was attended but over 150 people from a cross section of the general public. NatureUganda members, Journalists, Civil Society representatives, government agencies, tour operators and University students were also present.

During the Public lecture, Mr. Matia Lwanga Bwanika, the Wakiso District Chairman received a 'Wetlands Wise Use' award from MWE for his commitment to fight degradation of wetlands in Wakiso district and he vowed to be a martyr for the environment.

# NEWS



## NABUGABO RAMSAR SITE EXTENDED

Over the past five years (2012-2017) the East African Community (EAC) and Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) have been collaborating with USAID KEA and East Africa (USAID/KEA) to implement the Planning for Resilience in East Africa through Policy, Adaptation, Research, and Economic Development (PREPARED) Program.

NatureUganda participated in this project as a national implementing partner through review and development of the Nabugabo management plan. During the implementation of the project, the boundary of Nabugabo Ramsar site was extended from 22,000ha to 77,700ha.

In March 2018, the EAC Secretariat and LVBC organised a Regional Learning Event and Donors Roundtable on Environment and Natural Resources Management under the theme of “Building resilience in East Africa: Bridging the Gaps in Policy & Practice” in Arusha, Tanzania. NU was represented by Achilles Byaruhanga the Executive Director and Sandra Sayuni the Membership Officer.

The event brought together regional and national practitioners, policy makers, researchers, non-governmental organizations, international organizations, regional inter-governmental organizations, private sector representatives and development partners from the EAC region.

It also served as an avenue for information dissemination and awareness rising on achievements, lessons learned, and best practices developed from implementation of PREPARED Program through which Nabugabo Ramsar site boundary was extended.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN KISORO AND RUBANDA DISTRICTS PLEDGE TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

District leaders of Kisoro, Kabale and Rubanda pledged to collaborate with conservation partners, to integrate biodiversity concerns in district development plans to address grassroots factors and support national policies to enhance biodiversity conservation in their respective districts.



NatureUganda organized a biodiversity mainstreaming workshop for district stakeholders in February this year in Kisoro district. The overall objective of mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society is to address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss as stated by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

District leaders of Kisoro, Kabale and Rubanda pledged to collaborate with conservation partners, to integrate biodiversity concerns in district development plans to address grassroots factors and support national policies to enhance biodiversity conservation in their respective districts.

The workshop was attended by Mr. Abel Bizimana, the Kisoro district Chairman, the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) for Kisoro district, Chief Administrative Officer – Rubanda, Chairman LC V- Rubanda district and Environment Officers from Rubanda, Kabale, and Kisoro districts.

Government agencies such as National Forestry Authority (NFA) among others were also represented.

# NATUREUGANDA DEVELOPS 2018 WORKPLAN



In order to monitor progress of the 2016-2020 strategic plan implementation, NatureUganda conducted an annual planning meeting involving key technical staff, branches and Executive Committee members to review progress of the implementation of the 2017 work plan.

The team also developed the 2018 Annual Operation Plan which will focus on saving priority species, sites and habitats with the aim of enhancing resilience and sustainability.

In addition, the team was trained in the application of the Theory of Change planning methodology as well as the Most Significant Change - a project monitoring approach.

## NATUREUGANDA AND PARTNERS DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTING OFFSETS FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN UGANDA



After completion of the World Bank-funded Bujagali Hydropower Project (BHP) in 2012, a sustainable management plan was developed for its offset (Kalagala) to address biodiversity and human impacts. The area has high cultural and biodiversity value.

The Isimba Hydropower Project (IHP) is being constructed downstream of BHP (planned completion in 2018) and an assessment of impact of mitigation recommendations and its effects on

the Kalagala Offset was undertaken by NatureUganda with funding from UK's Darwin Initiative.

Together with NEMA, the responsible Government agency, NatureUganda, identified an urgent need to understand how the Isimba project may affect the Kalagala offset, how we (NatureUganda) can influence its implementation, to ensure No Net Loss to Biodiversity and the community and offer general guidance on monitoring and mitigating social and ecological

impacts of offsetting in Uganda. This year 2018, NatureUganda and Victoria Griffins, a PhD student from Oxford University conducted community feedback meetings from the assessment conducted.

Meetings were held in 6 villages where the socio-economic survey took place including; Kyabirwa, Kikubamutwe, Bubugo Bugobi, Bwase Buseta, Kalagala and Nampanyi. It was shown that the offset only catered for biodiversity and didn't consider the needs of the community including cultural values that were attached to the Bujagali Falls development site.

The community members agreed with the preliminary results that were presented to them and are looking forward to the full results of the assessment. The feedback meetings were highly appreciated by the community members and their local leaders who intimated that such efforts ensure keen participation from them in subsequent activities while knowing that their views are actually considered.

Detailed analysis of data from both the biodiversity and the socio-economic surveys is still under way and the full report will be shared with the community and relevant authorities upon completion. Results from this assessment will be used to draft guidelines for implementing offsets for development projects in Uganda and the world over because it is the first study of its kind.

Kerryn Morrison, the new ICF Vice President for Africa is based in South Africa at the Endangered Wildlife Trust regional office and came to Uganda to lead on a workshop for the East African Regional Crane conservation team. The team included participants from Uganda, UK, Rwanda, Kenya and South Africa.

The aim of the workshop was to bring all the East African programme staff together for the first time in a bid to share practical experience with the on-going crane conservation initiatives while also developing results chains and activities that will deliver the custodianship and conservation agreements strategies basing on the Open Standards Approach.

The workshop comprehensively focused on the East African projects and how they can practice evidence-based conservation through the Open Standards Model of Conservation. Members present discussed and agreed on the geographic scope and vision of the projects, targets and desired goals, threats and desired threat-reduction results for the conservation of Grey Crowned Cranes in East Africa.

Crane custodianship and Conservation Agreement strategies took centre stage and were comprehensively analysed while developing results chains and monitoring plans for each including Miradi Share and Share Point. These appropriately address the monitoring aspects of the cranes project at site level.

The ICF Vice President also met with teams implementing the Crane custodian initiative (commonly called crane custodians) in Kabale and Masaka regions. In Uganda, Jimmy Muheebwa the Cranes programme country coordinator based at NatureUganda oversees the implementation of conservation activities that currently focus on Kabale region.

The grey crowned crane is Uganda's national symbol and research indicates that its population has declined by over 80% in the last 3 decades.

# NATUREUGANDA PROMOTES GREY CROWNED CRANE CUSTODIAN INITIATIVE





# THREE DECADES OF MONITORING IBAS

NatureUganda has an established programme for monitoring Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) and has conducted this exercise for three decades. Currently, there are 26 sites where biannual monitoring of water birds is conducted in January and July. The monitoring is a voluntary exercise of NU members supported by UWA as well as the Ministry of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities, Ministry of Water and Environment, site Support Groups and NU secretariat.

The programme is designed to produce a detailed analysis of habitats, trends and migratory bird patterns in Uganda, provides a platform for training of young enthusiastic individuals in water bird monitoring and provides information to lead agencies for evidence-based decision making.

During the January 2018 counts, a total of 20 sites were covered including all sites in Ramsar sites and National Parks.

Sadly, it was observed that fishing community is having a big impact on birds as a result of poor disposal of the fishing gear. For example, a Grey-headed Gull on Musambwa Island was found stuck with a fish hook and a Pink-backed Pelican was found hanging dead in a tree strangled by a fishing line at Ddimbo landing site. A similar observation was made on the Northern channel of Lake Albert where a Little Egret was found strangled in a tree by a string from a fishing line.

This is a common observation may signal a threat to the safety of birds as a result of the fishing method and disposal of used nets.

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

AGM 3rd May 2018  
- Uganda Museum

World Migratory Birds Day  
– 13th May

International Day for Biological  
Diversity – 22nd May

World Environment Day  
– 5th June

Water Fowl and Bird Population  
monitoring  
– 1st -31st July

Expedition to Mabira Forest Reserve  
– 24th to 26th August

Vulture Counts  
– 1st September

Nature walk to Kajjansi Fish farm  
– 13th October

Big Birding day  
– 1st, 3rd and 10th November

Conservation Conference  
– 8th and 9th November

Excursion to Bwindi Impenetrable NP  
– 14th to 17th December

**DO NOT MISS**

## INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE AT NU

As students, we need different skills to navigate through the labour market with the unstable economic conditions. A number of graduates are stranded because jobs are scarce in the first place, but even when the opportunity arises, very few graduates have the edge to beat their competition to make the shortlist.

Employers demand students to be well behaved, well rounded with strong communication and team working skills, the ability to think critically but also to possess some soft skills.

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**I am forever grateful to NatureUganda management for the opportunity offered to me as an intern and for the co operation and assistance rendered whenever I needed it.**

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From my stay at NatureUganda field office in Kabale as an intern, I have gained invaluable experience through community activities like bamboo planting along the shore of lake Bunyonyi in Rwamashunga and continuous monitoring, ENETCOFA constitution restructuring, writing reports, and articles not forgetting taking photos for the organisation during field activities. I have also been exposed to the aspects of organizational communication both with supervisors and fellow interns.

I am forever grateful to NatureUganda management for the opportunity offered to me as an intern and for the co operation and assistance rendered whenever I needed it. I urge other students to subscribe to NatureUganda membership to get the experience of their lives.

By Chrispus Tweyongyere,  
Communications Student,  
BBUC Kabale



## WELCOME ABOARD

NatureUganda welcomes  
**Sandra Anyumizibwe Kusaasira**, the new Administrative Assistant – Front Office.

She is a graduate at Uganda Christian University, Mukono with bachelors in Mass Communication and good working experience.

Prior to this assignment, she worked with the Observer Newspaper as a news reporter and at NU, she will be the new face at the front office. Join me to welcome Sandra to the NU team



## CORPORATE MEMBERS



- Adroit Consult International
- African Crane Safaris
- Avian Safaris
- Bic Tours LTD
- Bunyonyi Safaris Ltd
- Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust (BMCT)
- Drywood Safaris
- Global Woods AG
- Gorilla Trek Africa
- Insight Birding Holidays
- Jane Goodall Institute Uganda
- Jubilee Tours LTD
- Pearl Africa Safaris
- Range Land Safaris
- Rwenzori Trekking services
- Ssesse Islands Beach Hotel
- Ssezibwa Falls Resort
- Uganda Wildlife Authority
- Venture Uganda Limited
- Bird Uganda Safaris
- Katwe Tourism Destination
- AA Safaris & Tours Ltd
- Parl Africa Tours & Travel

## INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS

- Focused Community SACCO
- Kitante Primary School
- Kalinabiri Secondary School
- Rubaga Girls Secondary school
- Mabamba Wetland Users Association (MWETA)
- Makerere University Conservation Biology Association (MUCOBA)
- Green Hill Academy
- Balibaseka Secondary School
- Bwindi Bird Club
- Neul Tours
- Kasheregenyi Friends Group
- Kampala International University
- Birdlife Uganda
- Uganda Wildlife Research and Training Institute
- Hill preparatory School

## WORKING GROUPS

- Plants Working Group
- Herps Working Group
- Mammal Conservation Group
- Friends of Dudus
- Microbial Resources Group
- Birdlife working Group

The  partner in Uganda and a member of 

JOIN US !  
— TODAY —

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