

# THE Naturalist

NEWSLETTER FOR NATURE LOVERS

Vol: 23 | April 2017



*Nature*Uganda



2

## TRAINING

NU and FFI Conduct joint training



4

## EXCURSION

NU - Muni University Branch at Murchison Falls



6

## LAKE NABUGABO

NU to develop Wetlands and Ramsar site Hand Book

The Naturalist is a publication by  
**NatureUganda**

**Writers:**  
Sandra Sayuni,  
Torach Edwin

**Contributors:**  
Ananias Nsiimenta  
Abia Atukwatse

**Photos:**  
Achilles Byaruhanga,  
Sandra Sayuni, Charlie Tebbutt





## Chairman's Word

Dear member,  
I bring to you yet another issue, Vol. 23 of the NatureUganda Newsletter, the Naturalist. Thank you all for the efforts you have rendered to the institution this quarter considering that everyone has made considerable contribution to conservation work in Uganda.

We have continued to expand especially our research areas with the help of the secretariat, members, volunteers and our partners. I take this opportunity to thank the different persons who have been participating in these research programs and contributing to the growth of the organization.

We have continued to engage local communities through our site support Group approach including Lutembe, Mabamba communities among others. We have registered tremendous improvement in environment and the Natural Resources from such initiatives. Our projects and programs have helped to ensure we pass good messages to conserve the environment and its resources.

We have had a series of activities in this quarter including the project surveys on Biodiversity offsets, successfully conducted the first round of waterfowl and Bird Population monitoring exercise, held a member's excursion to Lake Mbuo National Park, participated in various national and world celebrations like World life day and World wetlands day celebrations and a number of strategic partner meetings to highlight the works of our organization. I therefore thank all who participated in one way or the other in these events.

We have continued prioritizing our membership and communications strategy

We have continued to expand especially our research areas with the help of the secretariat, members, volunteers and our partners. I take this opportunity to thank the different persons who have been participating in these research programs and contributing to the growth of the organization.

which is now fully operational and are optimistic for better results for the major challenges that we face with our membership program. I therefore appeal to each one of us to keep renewing our subscription and encourage friends to register with us.

I wish you good reading as we strive to promote the understanding, appreciation and conservation of nature.

**Dr. Robert Nabanyumya**  
Chairman, NatureUganda.

## NU and FFI Conduct joint training

The use of local people to do these surveys is greatly rewarding as they give us reports on the resources use, threats as well as changes the habitat is going through. This in the long run will produce an efficient and less costly method of monitoring.

NatureUganda with support from Flora and Fauna International carried out training for Site Monitors identified by FFI from the areas they operate in around the Lake Victoria shores. The training comes in as support to the project, "Supporting and Promoting Community Conserved Areas in the Lake Victoria Basin for Biodiversity and Livelihood," which is being operated in areas of Mabamba Wetland, Makanaga Wetland and Sango Bay areas. The training took place from 19-22nd December at Vienna Hotel, Masaka and was letter complemented by field work during the NatureUganda's January Bird Counts.

The monitors were trained in Bird Population Monitoring (BPM) / Common Bird Monitoring where birds are used as indicators of environmental change. During the BPM, all birds seen and heard within the transect are recorded on data sheets provided by NatureUganda. The data sheets also provide a threat monitoring page including; the scope, severity, timing and magnitude of each threat



observed. New transects were set up in these areas and will now be added to the NatureUganda regularly monitored sites.

The use of local people to do these surveys is greatly rewarding as they give us reports on the resources use, threats as well as changes the habitat is going through. This in the long run will produce an efficient and less costly method of monitoring.

## Critical importance of geographical information & imagery analysis in uganda

*There is a growing interest and awareness on the value of promoting Geographical Information and subsequent use of remotely sensed data in inventorying, mapping and monitoring of the world's natural resources.*



Comparing with data formats in the 70s and 80s, today GIS is enabling institutions to manage data, make decisions and this tool has become an important language that improves communication amongst professional fields, teams and the general public on conservation of resources

Therefore, geographical information tool is an emerging new way to contribute towards achieving an organization's set long and short timely objectives .It is also becoming valuable in understanding and answering complex questions such as "What is going on and when could it may have started?" all these interesting scientific questions and more can be answered if records over time were tracked and recorded for usage or even retrieval during information urgency.

This helps in core decision making towards the critical resources, effective resource planning and identifying trends in various analyses. Satellite imagery and interpretation is of importance in visualizations and understanding current and past environmental situations to tell a story to the present and future communities and generations.

In Uganda, making important use of GIS and Remote sensing as a problem solving tool is critical, the tools can be used to predict changes in the environment and also manage conflicts such as land ownership among communities, communicating various geographic patterns and their relationships such as crime rates, land uses, the available environmental situations and natural resource extractions through boundary delineations. NatureUganda uses GIS tools in various occasions.

For example, it uses Global Positioning Systems for data collections to monitor bird species distribution, populations over time and inventory mappings. The Use of GIS and remotely sensed data has also helped NatureUganda promote the conservation of nature in Nabugabo Ramsar and other regions of Uganda. In Nabugabo, Global Positioning System aided sampling of suitable Biodiversity Areas worth protecting was used. This yielded and contributed to the extension of the Nabugabo Ramsar boundaries GIS and remote sensing can be applied almost in every real-life situation. With the user friendliness of the GIS elements, one can apply them in any area of need. Take for instance; a community may wish to answer a complex question "what avail-

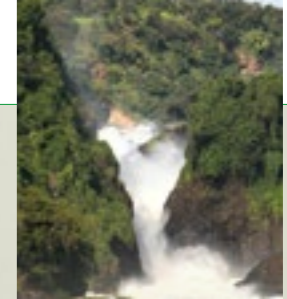
*This helps in core decision making towards the critical resources, effective resource planning and identifying trends in various analyses.*

able resources in our community can be our AOI to educate and impact on our people's wellbeing?" else-wise, a soon graduating student may what to get an answer for a question such as "Where can one get suitable workplace after graduation? .

Not limited to these aspects, a farmer wishes to explore and understand " which areas are suitable for irrigation and what crops may do better under the currently changing climate patterns?" it is Possible that these questions can be answered by GIS and thence produce positive results and save time and financial costs. It is therefore not surprising that GIS can also be applied in analysis, communication and suggestion of mitigation measures on climate related issues.

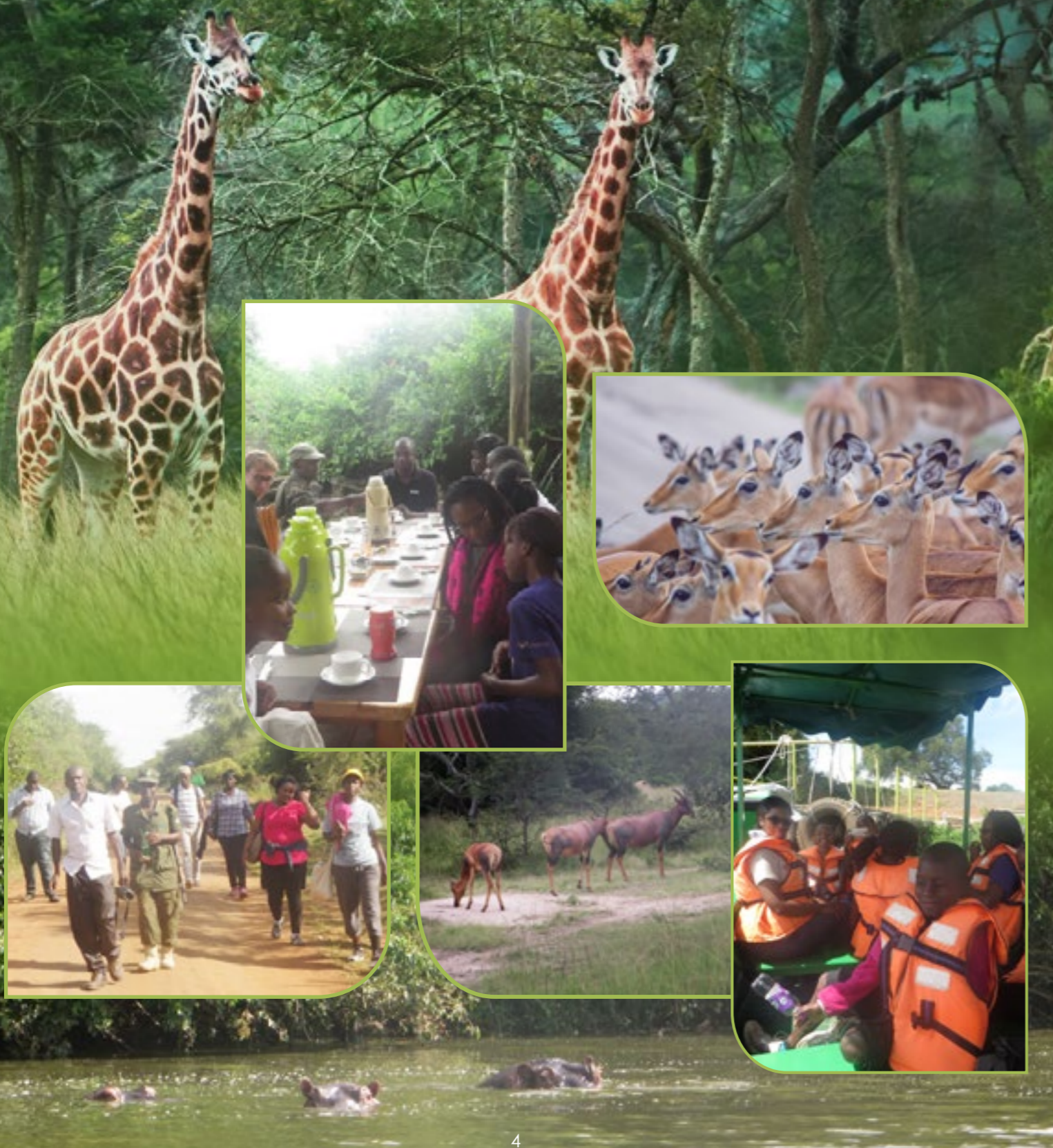
It is therefore important to apply the GIS and remote sensing concepts in Uganda's development programs





# LAKE MBURO

*An awesome reflection of Uganda  
...truely the Pearl of Africa!!*



# MUNI UNIVERSITY VISITS MURCHSION FALLS

*Our knowledge of the wild game had always been limited to pictorial representations of the animals in textbooks, journals, TV and newspapers. It was time for us to enjoy the experience first hand, and oh yes we did!!*

Easter Monday April 17th, 2017 was the D-day I was part of team Nature Uganda - Muni University Branch with which we hit the 3 hour journey to Murchsion falls National Park, a resident of 76 species of mammals, 451 birds (documented), insects and reptiles. Five wildlife reserves including the nearest Bugungu and Karuma Falls wildlife Reserves were added onto the park to form a larger conservation area of 5,663 sq.km in the Northern end of Albertine Rift valley. The park came into existence after the serious infestation of the area by testeflies which forced people to migrate away and this paved way for it's expansion.

A team of 73 members comprised of Fr. Dr. Odubuker Picho Epiphany (university Secretary), University Human Resource Officer, University nurse, Fr. Ngos Solomon Pacuto, Mr. IM-RAN Ejotre (NU Branch coordinator), 2 staff members from NTC-Muni, police officer, 2 Staff members of Muni University and 64 students all of us left Muni University at 7:00pm and headed for our Excursion at Murchsion falls NP. Arrival at Tangi gate was at 10:10 am where the free entrance permission had been granted by Uganda Wildlife Authority through Nature Uganda secretariat.

The game drive started as soon as we reached where the sights of animals and birds began to emerge. Worthhogs were first spotted busy excavating the ground followed by Olive baboons and then the elephant.

Taban the tour guide told us that the park harbours some of the big 5 of Africa, elephants, buffaloes and if chances lions and leopards were to be seen. He advised us to increase chances by paying attention and present a keen eye sight around any area we by passed. He further explained to us that, Worthhogs generally live in small groups with a few female members and the young and will have one dominant male responsible for protecting the sounder and mating.

More animals including the re-tailed monkeys and black and white colobus monkeys were spotted swinging from one tree to another. The commonest animal were the reddish brown Uganda jobs grazing along roadsides in larger numbers, the water bucks were seen enjoying the tree shades while the Jackson's heartbeasts grazed on the green Savannah grasses. Before long, emerged the graceful tallest living terrestrial animals and largest ruminant in the world, the giraffes. The way they moved left a great lesson for us to learn. Taban explained that it is classified under the family Giraffidae, along with its closest extant relative. Its species name refers to its

camel-like appearance and the patches of colour on its fur. A rare type of giraffes that has white legs were found in Murchsion! with a gestation period of 24 months. We actually came across one with a 3 month old calf. Older giraffes were observed to have darker patches on their skin.

As we were still admiring the giraffe, Taban shouted at the driver, stop stop! there appeared one of the 'big five' animals, the largest land animal in the world, elephant busy flapping it's giant ears to cool off. We all zoomed our cameras and took photos led by Ananius Nsiimenta our key photographer.



Continuing with the drive, birds of different species flew high up in the air. The list included the Shoebill Stork, the Goliath Heron, which Taban said are the largest herons in the world. Egrets were the commonest; they were spotted picking ticks on the backs of the buffaloes. Buffaloes though tough they seemed, did not chase away the egrets!. Some buffaloes appeared in territories while others in singles, Taban said, they had failed life with in the territories and thus tried an independent life and were described as the most dangerous buffaloes if met on foot. The largest herbivorous mammal in sub-Saharan Africa, the hippopotamus were seen only display the small portion of their back as they rested in the water. They are stout, naked-skinned, and Taban said that they have 3 stomachs and walk on four toes on each foot. "It is one of only two extant species in the family Hippopotamidae, the other being the pygmy hippopotamus, he explained.

We lastly had some communications from the administrators that had gone with us, received the blessings for the journey back home, particularly Arua, where we safely reached at 09:30Pm

**Ananias Nsiimenta,**  
Secretary for Events and Community Outreach



# MY JOURNEY AS A VOLUNTEER AT NATURE UGANDA

Since October 2016, I have had the privilege to work with Nature Uganda as a Volunteer and well, I must admit it has been an ocean of new ideas into my head as well as a lot of fun.

I have actively participated in quite a number of activities all aimed at protecting mankind through the conservation of Mother Earth. They include; The U-Green (Tree Planting) campaign in Salaama School for the Blind, Mukono District, Monthly Public Talks and Biodiversity Population Monitoring and Waterfowl Counts in different parts of Uganda. All these have been achieved thanks to the tireless team at the secretariat who move stones to meet deadlines and make such events a success.

It would really be unfair not to appreciate my strangers- now family at Nature Uganda who warmly took me in, shared Knowledge and other vital life aspects and have managed to leave many good scars in my heart. Among the lessons I have firmly learnt are transparency and indeed, thanks to the team for giving an opportunity to serve nature with you.

They include; The U-Green (Tree Planting) campaign in Salaama School for the Blind, Mukono District, Monthly Public Talks and Biodiversity Population Monitoring and Waterfowl Counts in different parts of Uganda. All these have been achieved thanks to the tireless team at the secretariat who move stones to meet deadlines and make such events a success.

I Pledge to always promote the Understanding, Appreciation and Conservation of Nature as my biggest Nature Uganda legacy.

ABIA ATUKWATSE

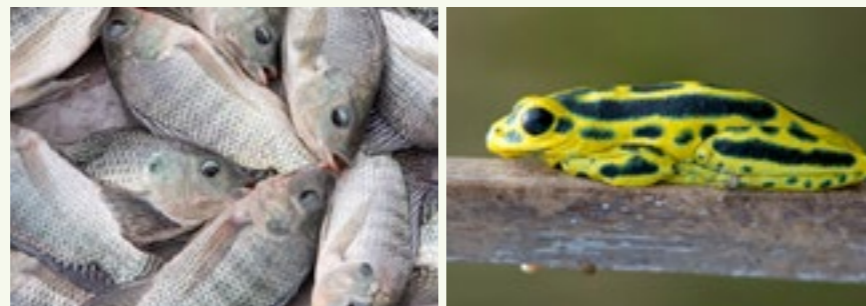


## Nature Uganda to develop the Lake Nabugabo Wetlands and Ramsar site Hand Book.

The hand book is one of the out puts of the one year project that Nature Uganda is undertaking in Nabugabo Wetlands and Ramsar site that started in March 2016 and will end this year 2017. The other two outputs of the project are; Re-viewing and updating the management plan; updating the Ramsar Information sheet (RIS) for Lake Nabugabo Wetlands and Ramsar site.

The process for updating of the Ramsar Information sheet has been completed and awaits submission to the Ramsar secretariat by the Ministry of Water and Environment while the management plan has been technically reviewed and is being edited and designed. Once editing and designing is completed, the management plan will be launched by the Hon. Minister of Water and Environment at a date to be communicated by the same Ministry. It is important to note that the management plan is not an end on itself but it will feed into another process of the project being managed by a consultant. Basing on the management plan; the consultant will formulate a conservation investment plan (CIP) which will be presented to the donors' conference for resource mobilization.

The hand book which is now under review will contain information on Lake Nabugabo Wetlands and Ramsar site .Nature Uganda initiated the process by developing the first draft followed by a review process which involves a core team from Nature Uganda and technical staff from the wetlands Department at



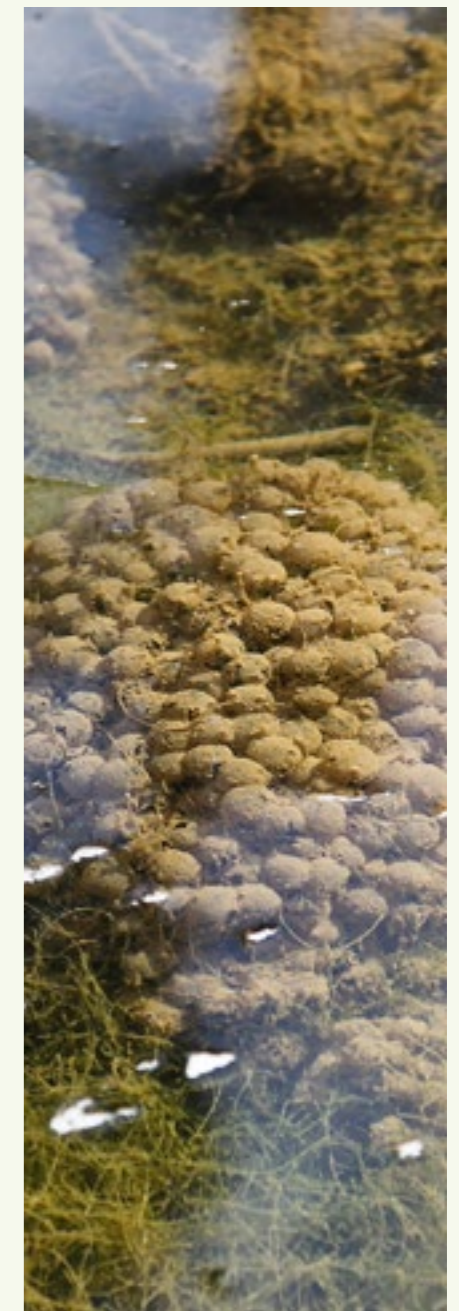
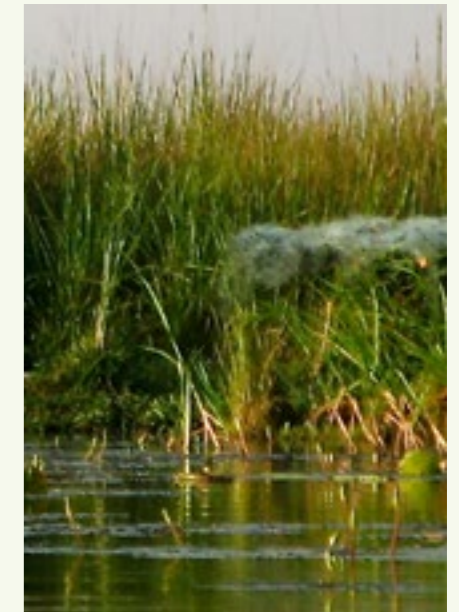
*Nature Uganda with support from the Planning for Resilience in East Africa through Policy, Adaptation, Research, and Economic Development (PREPARED/USAID/) Project is developing a hand book on Lake Nabugabo Wetlands and Ramsar site.*

The formulators of the project realized that there was no single document that has all the information on Lake Nabugabo Wetlands and Ramsar site as most of the available source documents are written in scientific language and scattered in different books, reports and journals.

the Ministry of water and environment. It will also be reviewed by the PREPARED project secretariat after which it will be officially launched and disseminated. It is being written in simple language and not scientific jargons for easy understanding by non scientists.

This is to ensure that it can be used by a wide range of stakeholders like local leaders, students in secondary schools and universities, researchers, tourists, and investors. The formulators of the project realized that there was no single document that has all the information on Lake Nabugabo Wetlands and Ramsar site as most of the available source documents are written in scientific language and scattered in different books, reports and journals. This made it difficult for leaders and other stakeholders to get adequate information to inform policy, planning and advocacy.

In this regard the Hand book has a collection of information on uniqueness of Lake Nabugabo, History of Lake Nabugabo and satellite lakes, the biodiversity (plants and animals), location, resources of Lake Nabugabo wetlands and Ramsar site, physical characteristics, stakeholders, public infrastructure, climate, tourist attractions, sensitive ecological sites, tourist facilities, people's livelihoods including cultural heritage investment opportunities and stakeholder analysis. It's hoped that once this hand book is launched and disseminated, it will go a long way in enhancing knowledge and awareness for proper planning and conservation







NatureUganda Membership is open to all nature enthusiasts. Join by paying membership fees at the secretariat in Naguru or at any of our upcountry branches.

You can also send membership fees through our

**MTN mobile number 0777 147 367**

Join us in Promoting the Understanding, Appreciation & Conservation of Nature

### MEMBERSHIP FEES

Category	Locals	
Sponsor	500,000	\$1000
Life membership	100,000 +	\$500
Corporate	200,000	\$350
Institutional	70,000	\$90
Family	25,000	\$30
Full members	20,000	\$20
Student	5,000	\$15

### CORPORATE MEMBERS



- Accolade Explorers
- 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
- Kombi Nation Tours
- 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

### 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

### WORKING GROUPS



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

The  partner in Uganda and a member of 



### For more information, Contact

NatureUganda | Plot 1, Katalima Crescent, Lower Naguru | PO Box 27034 Kampala  
 Tel: + 256 414540719 | Fax +256414533528 | info@natureuganda.org | www.natureuganda.org

 @natureuganda  
 @natureuganda