

THE Naturalist

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Nature Uganda



2

GOVERNANCE

NU holds Annual General Meeting (AGM 2017)



4

CONSERVATION

Launch of Management Plan and Hand book for Lake Nabugabo Ramsar Site



6

ECO-TOURISM

Raising the tourism profile of Lutembe Bay

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Chairman's Message

Dear member,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to Vol. 24. of the NatureUganda (NU) news letter The Naturalist. I extend my sincere gratitude for your continued support to the growth of our organization.

On behalf of the Executive committee (EC), I specifically wish to thank the secretariat and all our esteemed members for the wonderful support rendered to us while we conducted our 25th Annual General Meeting held on 18th May 2017.

It's with no doubt that your efforts made this day a success. My special thanks go to the members who endeavored to renew their membership subscription for this year, thank you very much. In this issue, we highlight the role of communities in conserving critical natural resources by empowering them and entrusting them to manage resources. We continue to advocate for the conservation of species, sites and habitats as a way of ensuring ecosystem services flow now and in the future.

We also bring to you news about the launch of the Management plan and handbook of Lake Nabugabo Ramsar site which was a climax of the one year project supported by Planning for Resilience in East Africa through policy, Adaptation, Research and Economic Development (PREPARED). We continue to form strong partnerships with various institutes in policy and advocacy issues and

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as such, we are able to take our work to conserve Uganda's critical natural resources. It's my humble call to you to join hands with us as we promote the understanding, appreciation and Conservation of Nature.

I wish you good reading!

Dr. Robert Nabanyumya
Chairman, NatureUganda.

NatureUganda Holds Annual General Meeting (AGM)

NatureUganda held its 25th AGM on Thursday 18th May 2017 at the Uganda Museum. This meeting was attended by over 100 Members and partners. It was presided over by the Chairman Dr. Robert Nabanyumya. In his report, the Chairman reported continued progress of the implementation of the strategic plan.

The Chairman reminded meeting that being members of NatureUganda is rather a way of living and that it is not just paying and renewing membership. He further noted that Nature Uganda's mission "promoting the understanding, appreciation and conservation of nature" is a huge responsibility that calls all of us to live in a sustainable way demonstrating our values.

He called upon every one's effort to raise their voices for nature and protect our natural resource. He made a flashback over the last 25 years, looking at the contribution made by NU to save nature and applauded the institution for the major roles played in this noble cause.

These include;

- Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA and IBAs)
- Identifying and designation of Ramsar sites
- Action plans to save threatened species
- Site management plans to save sites with key species
- Lobbying, advocacy and public awareness.



On the institutional strategic plan, the chair noted that the strategic plan had been reviewed and updated to include the new and emerging issues such as climate change.

He also informed members of the continued partnership with International organisations such as IUCN and partnership with Birdlife International.

On the other hand, the treasurer's report covered the audited income and expenditure of the society for a period of 12 months from January 1, 2016 to December 31st 2016 and also the projected income for the period January 1st

2017 to December 31st 2017. This report also looked at Programme areas that have continued to give institutional support over the years to support organizational development.

Executive Committee Elections

An executive election was conducted and three new members were identified to join the Executive committee. These are Ms. Lilly Ajarova, the new Vice Chairperson, Jonathan Bushara and Rogers Akatwijuka as new committee members.

Join us to welcome Ms. Lilly Ajarova, Jonathan Bushara and Rogers Akatwijuka on our Executive Committee.



A “Low-Key Monitoring” Approach to the Conservation of biodiversity: A case study of Blue Swallow at Mabamba Wetland

Mabamba wetland was designated an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area and a Ramsar site because of its importance as a habitat for key biodiversity.

It is home to over 300 bird species, among which is the globally threatened species such as the Blue Swallow (supports 38% of the global population) and the Shoebill. It also supports other globally threatened species of birds and mammals being a stopover for migratory birds. The wetland is also a source of livelihoods to the local community especially materials to make local crafts, or building materials, water for domestic and livestock use, fish and medicines.

A survey conducted in 2002, indicated Mabamba Bay is among the Blue Swallow strongholds in Uganda. Other areas include: Nabugabo and Sango bay areas. All these three areas are IBAs and Ramsar Sites but are not legally protected and therefore solely lie on the communities that surround them for the protection. The Blue Swallow is a globally and

regionally vulnerable species according to the IUCN Red List. It is an intra-African Migrant breeding in the eastern parts of Southern Africa and wintering in Uganda (May-September) Democratic Republic of Congo and Kenya. It is an aerial species known to inhabit seasonally flooded grasslands and wetland habitats often feeding at wetland edges with scattered shrubs and trees and roosting in burnt patches of the Swamp edges (NatureUganda, 2002 and 2004).

NatureUganda has carried out a number of community conservation and development interventions at Mabamba Bay through a number of projects, the most prominent being the IBA monitoring programme which has been in place for over 20 years. Most of these projects are highly dependent on funds making them unsustainable in the long run this prompted for a monitoring mechanism which would be less costly and sustainable.

The Low-Key Monitoring (LKM) also referred to as Locally-based Monitoring or Low level Monitoring is simplified monitoring involving local communities and other stakeholders in data collection, interpretation, analysis and decision making on the basis of the results. LKM develops the capacity of the community in resource management, awareness of sustainable development, local own-

ership to the area, resolves conflicts as well as strengthening civil society. LKM involves these basic steps: Preparation, Mobilization, design, testing, implementation and monitoring/Evaluation. The monitoring of the Blue Swallow using LKM at Mabamba started off with a stakeholder meeting where two focal persons were appointed to be the champions. They underwent training and have been a resource in monitoring of the Blue Swallow as well as training others.

The focal persons are in charge of scouting for sites and the species and noe include; Mako, Buyege, Bubebere, Mabamba Landing Site/Kilombe and Kanyanya. They regularly monitor the above sites and recorded the data on the LKM Forms that we developed together with the community and give regular reports on their sightings as well as threats to the habitats, and this will help in fostering conservation. With feedback from these focal persons and trainees, we have developed LKM Guidelines that can easily be replicated to foster monitoring and conservation of other species in Mabamba and any other areas.

The development of the Guidelines will also support the International Single Species' Action Plan for the Blue Swallow that was developed in 2002 and reviewed in 2012.



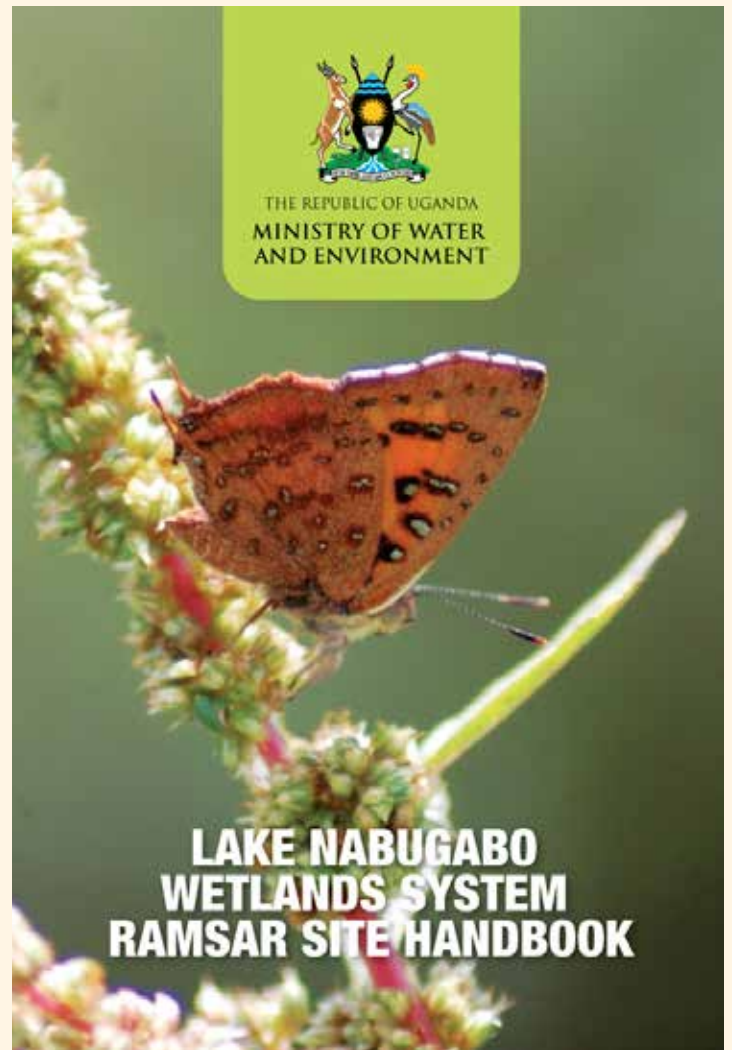
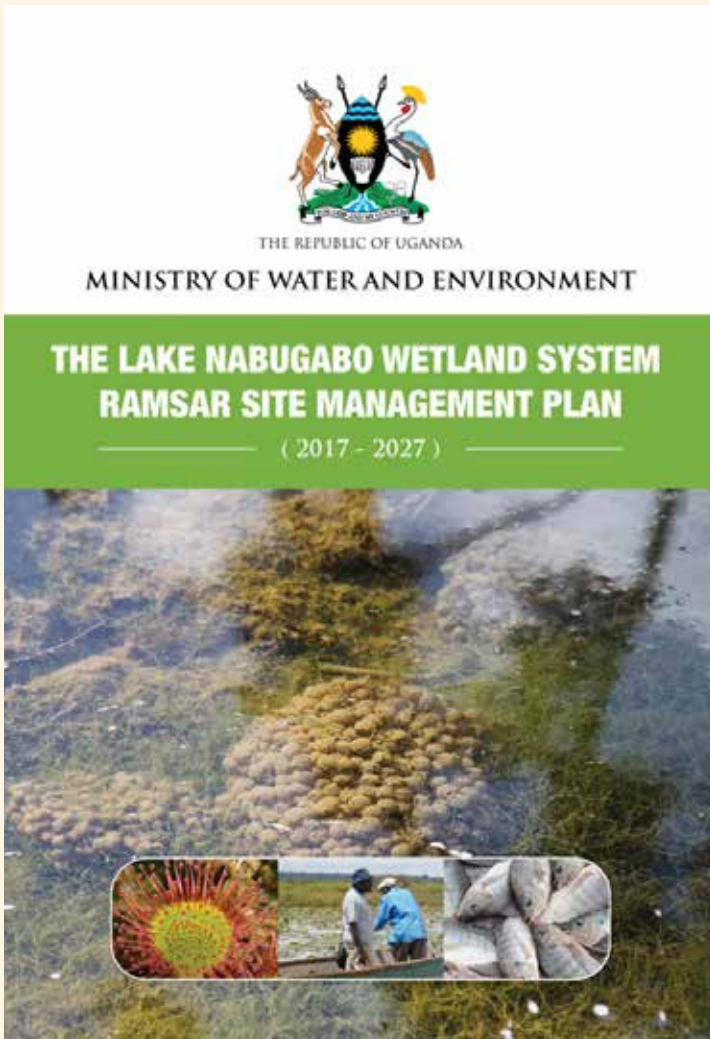
Dr. Scott McCormick, Chief of Party PREPARED signing the Lake Nabugabo Ramsar site management plan. ↻

LAUNCHING THE MANAGEMENT PLAN AND HANDBOOK OF LAKE



On the 16th June 2017, a new Management plan for L. Nabugabo Wetland System Ramsar site was launched at St. Hildegard Primary School, Nabugabo. The event was presided over by the Hon. Minister of Water and Environment. The launch of the management Plan and Information Handbook was the climax of the one year Planning Process for Resilience in East Africa through policy, Adaptation, Research and Economic Development (PREPARED) project funded by USAID, implemented by NatureUganda on behalf of the Ministry of Water and Environment.

Nabugabo wetland was designated as a Ramsar site in 2004. This followed inventories of biodiversity that highlighted that the wetland and associated network of lakes constituted the highest biodiversity rich area in L. Victoria basin. This included endemic fish species, endemic plant species, carnivorous plants, high richness



NABUGABO RAMSAR SITE

of birds including globally threatened species and a key migration stopover. The wetland was also identified as an Important Bird Area (IBA) in 2007 and now recognized as a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA). The prioritization of Lake Nabugabo Ramsar site by PREPARED was informed by a number of studies and the review of available literature. For instance An Ecosystem Profile Assessment (EPA) was undertaken in 2015 by USAID in the Lake Victoria Basin (LVB) to provide a broad overview of biodiversity values, the causes of biodiversity loss, and current conservation investments and through this study, Lake Nabugabo Ramsar site was listed as a Biologically Significant Area (BSA).

In 2016, USAID through PREPARED project availed funds to review the Management Plan for the Ramsar Site and where possible extend the boundaries to cover the identi-



The launch of the management plan and Hand book was a climax of the one year planning for Resilience in East Africa through policy, Adaptation, Research and Economic Development (PREPARED) Project funded by USAID and implemented by Nature Uganda on behalf of the Ministry of Water and Environment



fied BSA. Consequently, NatureUganda was contracted to support Ministry of Water and Environment to undertake a one year process to review information, carryout new biodiversity inventories and revise the L. Nabugabo Ramsar site Management Plan. The result was the extension of the area from 22,000ha to 77,700ha and a new L. Nabugabo Wetland System Ramsar Site Management Plan was developed. The launch of the management plan and Hand book was a climax of the one year planning for Resilience in East Africa through policy, Adaptation, Research and Economic Development (PREPARED).

A Popular Version (summary) of the Management Plan was also developed and launched together with the Management Plan and an Information Handbook that will be used to increase investment in the area including tourism development.

Mabamba Community in a drive to “Keep Mabamba Clean”



Mabamba Wetland attracts a great number of people that use the wetland in various ways, including tourism, fishing etc. The channels leading from Mabamba Bay Landing Site are a busy route taking people and goods to and from Bussi Island. It is these same channels tourists use to view the magnificent Shoebill Stork and other birds. Unfortunately, many people throw their plastic bags and bottles overboard, causing unsightly and waste pollution of the swamp. This clogs boat engines, tangles fishing nets and may endanger wildlife.

On International Women's Day, 8th March 2017, a group of members from Mabamba Wetland Eco-tourism Association (MWETA) which includes boatmen, local guides, fishermen, crafts women and well wishers started up a campaign dubbed “Keep Mabamba Clean” . They went into the swamp and collected 5 sackfuls of plastic bottles and rubbish. They also collected litter from the landing site and made the place more attractive for everyone. The rubbish was burnt and the bottles were taken by the fishermen who reuse them as floaters for their fishing nets.

Lessons learnt.

- Members have set the 1st Thursday of every month to clean the wetland
- Boatmen promised to remind their passengers to bring back the rubbish to land.
- MWETA provide a rubbish bin and to dig a pit for the inflammable litter. Guests eating packed lunches advised to take their litter away with them
- Posters will be made to encourage everyone to keep Mabamba clean. The members agreed to keep a clean environment and promote the conservation of the wetland. This campaign happens every first week of each month.

Raising the tourism profile of Lutembe bay



Lutembe Bay is one of Uganda's Important Bird Areas (IBA) and a wetland of international importance (Ramsar site) since 2006. It is located only 20km from Kampala and easily accessible. It is a major bird migration stop-over for tens of thousands of White-winged Black Terns, Gull-billed Terns, Grey-headed Gulls and a number of other species of water birds such as Waders, Plovers, Ducks and Storks.

The bay is also home to various resident species of birds including Uganda's national symbol, the Grey Crowned Crane, the very rare Shoebill, the beautiful White-backed Night Heron and several kingfisher species. These make it an interesting and never to miss site for bird watching around Lake Victoria.

Unusual Sightings



Red-Knobbed Coot Great Black-headed Gull

1. Over 350 **Red-Knobbed Coots** (left) sighted by RS, JM, AA and FFI volunteers at Toma Landing Site in Sango bay Area during the January Waterfowl Counts. They were in groups on water

2. **Black-collared Barbet** (back) sighted at Rwizi Track as you head to Rubanga Gate in Lake Mburo National Park during the Raptor Counts in Lake Mburo National Park in January by RS, JM and Moses Matsiko (UWA Ranger Guide). This Barbet is widely spread in Tanzania and some parts of coastal Kenya.

3. An individual of the **Great Black-headed Gull** (right) seen at Lake Munyanyange by RS, JM, Ouma Richardson (Site Guide at KATIC) during the January Waterfowl counts in Queen Elizabeth National Park. This Gull is massive compared to the rest of the Gulls that visit Uganda.

RS-Roger Skeen, JM-Judith Mirembe, AA-Abia Atukwatse, MM-Moses Matsiko, OR-Ouma Richardson

A joyful Experience

AN INTERN'S WORD

It is interesting how so often we notice things and do not get to a point of appreciating the beauty that lies in them.

I have always seen birds like most people have, but i had never thought about them. Internship with NU has opened up my mind to think differently of things. People here explore this field and connect it with different vital processes and utilize this vast knowledge of information to improve lives and biodiversity.

Being here makes me recognize the fact that if you can't appreciate nature, or even something else, you fail to see the value and hence fail to experience it joyfully.

I therefore that *NatureUganda* for this opportunity that has exposed me to the beautiful creatures of birs species and i urge you all to join NU so that you can tell a similar story

Omogor Gideon James
MUK -Deartment of Environmental Management



Red-faced Barbet

We have added to the team. WELCOME ABOARD



Dr. Aine Omucunguzi Adalbert
East African Regional Manager
Cranes Project



Dr. Dianah Nalwanga
Director Programs



Mr. Munaaba Daniel Isaac
Project Officer; People Partner
with Nature-Kabale office (PPN)



Mr. Benon Sengendo
Membership
& Communications officer



DOUBLE BLESSING

It was not only getting an opportunity to work with NatureUganda but a double blessing I should say! The 12th day of July will never be the same again for me, at exactly 12:36am I was declared a 'papa' to an amazing baby boy. After 9 whole months of imagining and speculating, the actual feeling of finally seeing your child is one you cannot put into words but can only experience.

His name is Bayana – Swahili for clear knowledge/lucid/earnest which are virtues his generation will need. We thank God for this blessing to the Sengendos'





Black-collared Barbet

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



- 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
- 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 



For more information, Contact

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