

THE Naturalist

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NatureUganda



GOLFING TO SAVE THE CRESTED CRANE

Pg 6

IN THIS ISSUE ...



NU Scoops Environmental Award

2



Muchuya Swamp is Burnt

3



Youth in Masaka Adopt Wetlands

4



Taking Stock of Mabira Forest

5



Our Visits & Unusual sightings

7



Economic value of Lutembe assessed

To support strategies to maintain the ecological integrity of the wetland.

By Hakim Kaddu

NatureUganda is currently carrying out an ecosystem services assessment of the Lutembe wetland. It is hoped that the results from the assessment will enable stakeholders and the community at Lutembe come up with strategies to maintain the ecological integrity of the wetland. Lutembe is an internationally recognised wetland. It is an Important Bird Area and also designated as a Ramsar site. It supports globally threatened species of birds, Cichlid fish and rare butterfly species. ...Continued to page 2

Editorial Team

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Chairman's message



Greetings,

It is always my pleasure to present to you what we have been upto during the quarter!

Here at *NatureUganda*, it is excitement as we were able to get started with the Golf Tournament! The tournament is one of the milestones as an organisation we set to reach out to the corporates so as to improve their understanding of conservation.

In addition to the Golf Tournament, it is always good to know that people watch and appreciate what you do. During the World Environment day, NU was recognised for exemplary contribution to Environment Management in Uganda by NEMA.

But as they say, it is never complete without a disappointment. Our efforts in Echuya were negatively affected when the Muchuya swamp got burnt.

We however continued doing what we do best with members. We had a trip to Mabira among others. Read on!

Dr Robert Nabanyumya,
Chairperson, Executive

NU Scoops Environmental Award

By Martha Akello

NatureUganda was recognised for being the CSO with exemplary contribution to Environment Management in Uganda by the National Environment Management Authority.



The award was presented by the former Minister of state for Environment Hon. Flavia Munaaba during the World Environment Day Celebrations at Pece Stadium in Gulu in June 2016.

The focal point person for Biodiversity in NEMA Mr. Francis Ogwal says *NatureUganda* was awarded because the organisation has continuously done research in the area of birds, which are an indicator of the status of the health of the environment.

"If *NatureUganda* reports point out that a particular specie is on the decline, it is a sign that something is going wrong with the environment," said Mr Ogwal.

He added that *Nature Uganda* reports have over the years helped NEMA come up with plans to address environmental challenges. "Most recently they have indicated that the Crested Crane population has gone down drastically which is an indication of degraded wetlands," said Mr Ogwal

Assessing Lutembe's Economic value

..Continued from page 1

However, it is highly threatened with agriculture, infrastructure development among others. The community in Lutembe engages in activities such as fishing, sand mining, brick making, papyrus harvesting, water harvesting and agriculture.

Lilian Twanza from *NatureUganda* shares that the assessment is meant to focus on the value of resources that the community around the wetland gets from these resources related ecosystem services, nature based recreation as well as the air quality and local climate regulation.

These are the services the local people consider most important to them. So far, the assessment has covered the cultivated goods, wild harvested goods and water use services.

Preliminary findings show that the community is immensely benefitting from the wetland, based on the services they get. According to Twanza, members who are into growing of vegetables and those engaged in tourism on the site seem to benefit most from the wetland. She says, "People who are cultivating tomatoes report to earn upto 15 million shillings from their activities while those engaged in fishing especially Nile perch reported to be earning about shs30m per year!

The project aims at strengthening governance structures for sustainable and equitable management of wetlands, improve understanding of their values, and facilitate knowledge exchange to enhance wetland policies and their implementation in the Lake Victoria Basin.

MUCHUYA SWAMP BURNT

By Zeneb Musimire

Fire gutted approximately 30 hectares of Mchuya swamp in Echuya Central Forest recently. The fire started on Saturday 23rd July at around 9pm when one of the locals is suspected to have gone to the forest to steal honey. The fire was eventually put off put off by the locals, NFA, NU with help from the police fire brigade on Sunday 24th, July, 2016 at around 4:00pm.

The suspect was later apprehended with support from locals. Echuya Forest is found between Kabale and Kisoro district. It plays a significant role in stabilizing soils, protection against strong winds, and is an important water catchment area.

Muchuya swamp is found in Echuya Forest. *Nature*Uganda has worked in Echuya with the communities since 2004. Currently, NU is implementing the Integrating Livelihoods and Conservation– People Partner with Nature (PPN) project in Echuya,

During this time, NU has been able to implement Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) as a means of encouraging community participation and responsibility towards the conservation of Echuya. This has resulted into protecting the forest from threats such as wild fires and irresponsible harvesting of forest resources.



Before the fire

Youth in Masaka “adopt wetlands”

Nkobazambogo youth group has conserved Sitatungas through conservation of Birinzi wetland



By Tonny Mutagubya

Lake Victoria Catchments Environment Education Programme (LVCEEP) works with youth groups to promote sustainable livelihoods through Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

The programme strives to create sustainable model homes which later culminate into model villages which have been given the name ESD villages. So far two ESD villages have been set up in Masaka area under the names of Lukaya - Mpugwe And Kaswazinda ESD villages.

These model villages are spearheaded by youth groups whose members have

been trained in ESD and how to turn their homes into visitor centers.

Each of these homes is a source of inspiration and learning centre for the surrounding community for best practices like energy saving practices, tree growing, vegetable growing, proper waste management, proper sanitation, food security, rain water harvesting, organic farming practices and income generation. The members promote local knowledge through establishment of herbal gardens in their homes to conserve rare medicinal species. The youth groups in these ESD model villages adopt wetlands within the

ESD village with the aim of conserving them. Through the knowledge gained on advocacy, they work with the local government and local leaders in the area to promote conservation through being vigilant and ensuring that these wetlands are used sustainably; educating the local people on wetland importance and use; through village meetings and reporting illegal wetland use to the relevant authorities.

Through their efforts, Nkobazambogo youth group in Lukaya Mpugwe ESD-village has ensured that Sitatungas are conserved through engaging the hunters, many of whom have now given up the activity and are now working together to conserve the Sitatungas in Birinzi wetland. They also monitor wetland use and have so far identified three breeding areas of the Grey Crowned Crane.

In Kaswazinda ESD village, sand miners in Kajjansembe wetland have been sensitized, trained on alternative income generating activities after which they formed a group of Bannamusenyu Youth Group. They are now doing catering services to get extra income. This youth group now works hard to conserve the wetland and also educate other wetland users on its importance.

My first birding experience:

By Anke Barahukwa



My knowledge of birds had always been limited to the domestic birds such as chicken, turkeys, pigeons and a few birds in the wild that flew around our locality.

A chat with birders triggered my curiosity in the activity. Luckily, the Big Birding Day (BBD) 2015 was around the corner.

November 14, 2015 was the D-day! I was part of Team Mabamba with which we hit the road to Mabamba in Mpigi, a prominent avian residence of over 300 bird species.

I saw 81 species of water birds and terrestrial birds with the aid of binoculars. Together with my teammates and bird guides. It was amazing how experienced birders easily identify the birds by the calls/sounds they make, colour, body size and shape, beaks, flight patterns among others. I listened to my teammates mention names like; Bronz Manikin, Great Blue Turraco, Pied Kingfish-

I listened to my teammates mention names like; Bronz Manikin, Great Blue Turraco, Pied Kingfisher, Winding Cisticola, Yellow-Billed Ducks among others. I wondered when I will be able to do the same with ease. So I paid full attention. I realized that the names of the birds actually matched up their features making it easier to memorize them.

er, Winding Cisticola, Yellow-Billed Ducks among others. I wondered when I will be able to do the same with ease. So I paid full attention. I realized that the names of the birds often matched up their features making it easier to memorize them.

The Saddle-Billed Stork was the highlight of my trip! After failing to see the much sought after Shoebill, seeing the tall bird rise gracefully from the marshes got me appreciating nature. Any novice birder would have loved the scene.



Taking stock of Mabira Forest

By Martha Akello

In June, about 30 of *NatureUganda* members revisited Mabira Forest to take-stock of what has been happening to the Forest reserve since the time of the infamous give away attempts by government to a sugarcane investor.

Members visited the Important Bird Area, the power corridor which is managed by Uganda Electricity Transmission Company Limited as well as the famous Griffins Falls located on River Musamia.

Mabira is a forest of interest to NU members because; it is a home to 315 species of birds including the endangered Nahan's Francolin, the magnificent Great Blue and Black-billed turracos, African Emerald Cuckoo, and over 400 tree and-shrub species.

Mr. Leo Twinomuhangi from National Forestry Authority who led the members through the forest said that development is a constant threat to the forest. There are many urban centers coming up around the reserve. Many of these urban centers put a lot of pressure on Mabira for forest products such as poles for building and other products.

A part from the upcoming centers, there are other developments within the forest such as the powerline. The Standard Gauge Railway too is expected to pass through the forest.

Ms. Mugenyi Christine, the sector manager at Mabira Forest shared that 19 partners have been given licences to manage the eco tourism sites and activities within the forest. Some of these partners include the Rain Forest Lodge and Griffins Falls.

Members were however concerned that the new developments within the forest could expose the forest to encroachment and risk biodiversity in the reserve. For example communities around the forest are now digging under the power lines. In the process they are likely to kill the animals such as monkeys and birds that may invade their gardens.

Twinomuhangi however, said the forest plays a great role in the ecosystem because it pumps water into the River Nile, it is a carbon sink and all emissions from Jinja and Kampala are sequestered in the Mabira Forest.

Members also took note of the highly polluted River Musamia due to a nearby Sugar Factory that has failed to put up lagoons for its waste which eventually ends up in the river through to the River Nile.



Golfing to save the Crested Crane

NatureUganda held the inaugural Crane Golf Tournament in July this year. James Byaruhanga and Annete Kiconco set the tone after pulling victories in the tournament. Byaruhanga emerged top in the men's category with 43 points while Kiconco proved best in the ladies bracket after collecting 34 points.

The one day event was organized as a way of partnering with the golf fraternity in promoting conservation of the environment in Uganda. Proceeds from the event will be channeled to saving the endangered national bird, the Crested Crane, which is a symbol of declining biodiversity in Uganda.

The tournament enabled NU to reach corporates with messages on conservation as well as well build partnerships with those corporates interested in conservation.

Nature Uganda
Golf Championship

Overall winner Men:
James Byaruhanga 43

Overall winner Women:
Annette Kiconco 34

Group A (Men)
Joseph Mwanjje 37
Cedric Bruna 31

Group B
Frank Mugambage 35

Group A (Women)
Lydia Mutesi 31

Group B
Annete Kiconco 34



WE HAD A CHANCE TO VISIT...



Our members visited Semliki National Park and the Sempaya Hot Springs



Gulu University Branch visited the Lamogi Hills during the quarter



 *White-backed Night-Heron*

UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

The July-August Waterfowl counts have majorly been characterized by breeding birds and we were lucky to encounter a pair of breeding White-backed Night-Herons in Lutembe Bay on 24th July, 2016 a first record of this species in this area.

Members of the Lutembe Wetland Users Association recently reported that the eggs successfully hatched into young ones that will fledge if no disturbance is caused. The White-backed Night-Heron is usually seen on Lake Mburo, however Lake Mburo has never reported successful fledging young as they are faced with a lot of disturbance from boats. A pair of the Herons was sighted in a nest with eggs. We hope Lake Mburo will have fledged young this time round.

In addition, a Shoebill, a globally threatened bird known to inhabit undisturbed wetlands was recorded at Mabamba Bay, Makanaga Wetland, Murchison Falls Delta, Lake Opeta and Bisina wetlands among others. Recently a Shoebill has been sighted on the River Katonga Wetlands along the Masaka Highway specifically the Lwera Wetland. Just keep your eyes out of the window when travelling along that highway, you may just get lucky.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Expedition to Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary	October 21st - 22nd
Launch of the Big Birding Day	November 7th
Big Birding Day	November 12th
Big Birding Day Festival	November 18th



SHOEBILL | Photo by: Achilles Byaruhanga

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

NU MEMBERS - 2016

CORPORATE



- 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

- 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 



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