THE
Naturalist

NEWSLETTER FOR NATURE LOVERS VOL : 34 | APRIL 2025

NatureUganda

Mitigating Climate Change through Forest Conservation

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

CONTENTS

Chairman's Message

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the 34th edition of the Naturalist. I also want to appreciate all those members who have attended our monthly Public Talks and nature walks as we continue to raise awareness and education of the importance of nature conservation. NatureUganda continues to play a critical role in conserving Uganda's unique environment and rich biodiversity. In this issue we highlight the importance of forests in mitigating Climate Change as more urgent than before with a call for action to everyone to do their part.

Forests are a valuable asset to our nation, providing essential ecosystem services. However, Uganda's forests are under immense pressure, with deforestation rates alarmingly high estimated at over 100,000ha forest loss per year. Our country has lost a significant portion of its forest cover over the past century, and this decline continues to accelerate due to human activities exacerbating the effects of climate change.

In the last 10 years, we have spearheaded various conservation initiatives to restore degraded forests, promote sustainable land management, and enhance climate resilience among communities. Through innovative approaches such as Collaborative Forest Management (CFM), climate smart interventions such as energy saving technologies, and community conservation agreements (CCAs), we have empowered a significant number of households living adjacent to forests such as Echuya, Kasyoha-Kitomi, and Mabira Central Forest Reserves among others to actively participate in forest conservation, forest and landscape restoration while benefiting from sustainable forest resources.

However, our commitment to environmental sustainability extends beyond forests. NatureUganda has also made significant contribution in wetland conservation and restoration, reducing biomass consumption through energy saving technologies, and climate-smart agriculture. By introducing energy-saving stoves, we have helped reduce firewood consumption, improve household health, and lessened the strain on our natural resources. Additionally, the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices has not only increased food security but also strengthened community resilience to climate change.

In this newsletter, we also highlight an exciting milestone in Uganda's biodiversity research—the discovery of three new chameleon species (Rhampholeon nalubaale, Rhampholeon plumptrei and Rhampholeon monteslunae).

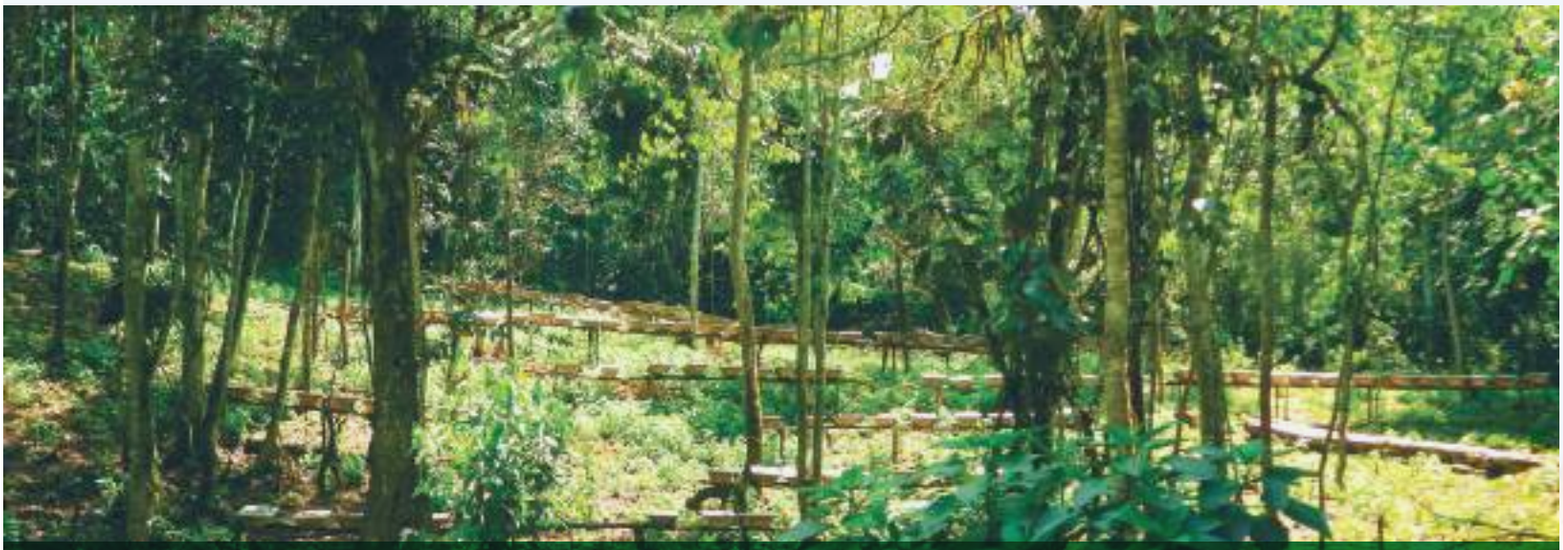
This remarkable finding underscores the ecological wealth we are privileged to safeguard including species that we have not discovered or recorded and the urgent need to protect our natural heritage from habitat loss and illegal wildlife trade

As we continue these efforts, we recognize that conservation is a shared responsibility. I extend my deepest gratitude to our funders, partners, government agencies, community members, and all stakeholders who work tirelessly to ensure the success of our initiatives. Your dedication and collaboration are invaluable in our mission to promote the understanding, appreciation and conservation of nature in Uganda and globally.

Together, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to conservation, ensuring that Uganda's natural resources thrive for years to come.
I would like to invite you to our Annual General Meeting on 29th May 2025 where more success stories will be shared in our annual report. See you there.

Dr Robert Kityo
Chairman, NatureUganda

Mitigating Climate Change through forest conservation



Apiary project at Kasyoha-Kitomi Central Forest Reserve, Rubirizi district

Forests play a crucial role in the lives of millions of Ugandans, providing critical ecosystem services including food, water purification, climate change mitigation and livelihoods support among others. However, these ecosystems are disappearing fast. According to Global Forest Watch, Uganda lost 1.1mha of tree cover, a reduction of 14% from 2001 to 2023, emitting over 500 Mt of CO_2e emissions. It is estimated the country loses over 122,000 ha/year of forest every year since 1990. According to the National Forestry Authority, human activities and climate change are some of the major drivers of forest loss in the country. Today, Uganda's forest cover stands at 18.4% or about 3,627,000 hectares.

For over two decades, NatureUganda (BirdLife Partner in Uganda) has been playing a key role in restoration and conservation forests in Uganda.
In the past, combative-style management didn't secure forest conservation and therefore, innovative approaches have come into play to restore the country's degraded forests", says Jimmy Muheebwa, Director of Conservation and Partnerships at NatureUganda.

One such innovative approach is collaborative forest management (CFM), a conservation model that requires forest adjacent communities to formally organize in groups which commit to regulate forest use, patrol the forest, and are in turn allowed to benefit from activities within the forest.

In 2012, NatureUganda supported the Ministry of Water and Environment in establishing eight CFM groups in two landscapes of Kasyoha-Kitomi (433 km^2) and Echuya (34km^2) Central Forest Reserves (CFRs). In addition, NatureUganda has integrated the CFM approach in various projects including AfriEvolve funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU), People partner with Nature through Dansk Ornitologisk Forening (BirdLife Denmark), and Trillion Trees, a partnership between BirdLife International, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF).

In the Echuya, Kasyosha Kitomi and Mabira Central Forest Reserves,

NatureUganda is working with total of 20,000 households, this includes 6,000 households around Echuya CFR, 9,500 households around Kasyoha Kitomi CFR and 4,500 households around Mabira CFR.

To date, over 250,000 tree species including nitrogen fixing species such as Grevilea and Calliandra; fruit trees like as avocado, and multipurpose trees like Maesopsis, Mahogany and bamboo have been planted in the three landscapes of Echuya, Kasyoha and Mabira forests.

A key aspect of NatureUganda's interventions includes climate change adaptation. To this end, over 1,750 Energy Saving Stoves have been given to the communities, including 750 stoves constructed with local materials.

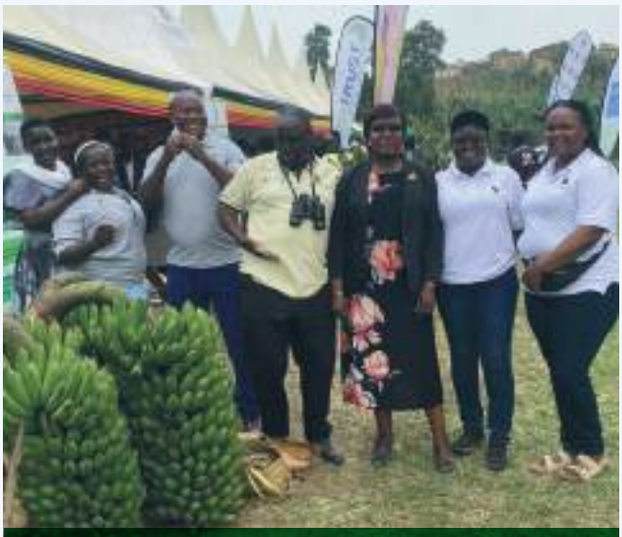
"Since I began using the energy saving stoves, my firewood reduction has gone down by 50%, and the smoke in the kitchen has greatly reduced", says one Kajoina, a member of Buzenga Environment Conservation Association (BUECA), in the Kasyoha Kitomi CFR.

NatureUganda has supported community members with energy-saving cook stoves

According to data by NatureUganda, firewood headloads of 32kgs last for four days for a household of six with no energy saving stove, while the same headload lasts for nine (9) days, for the same size household, using the energy saving stoves. Alongside the energy saving stoves, NatureUganda has demonstrated Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) interventions that address the interlinked challenges of food security through boosting productivity and addressing climate change by enhancing community resilience and reducing greenhouse gas emissions Local communities are now practicing sustainable land management practices such as soil erosion control, water retention and agroforestry. NatureUganda is supporting over 2,000 farmers with training and good agronomic practices.

"In the past used to harvest banana bunches weighing about 22kgs. With the training from NatureUganda in climate smart agriculture, my banana bunches now weigh 46kgs, says Gideon Mutasheka, a banana farmer.

Further, NatureUganda supported the establishment of wine making and bee keeping enterprises and related value chains. Eight enterprises including four apiculture groups and four wine making groups have been supported in training, provision of production and storage materials, branding and bulking of the products.



Banana bunches from farmers being exhibited during World Wetlands DayCelebrations in Kyegegwa district

Currently, the four apiculture groups produce a total of 2,600kgs of honey annually, with a kilo of honey costing UGX 10,000 (US$ 2.7). Similarly, the four wine making groups have increased production with one group, Nyaburare Women Wine Producers, earning over UGX 9,894,841 (US$ 2,700). Additionally, the groups have formed Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations (SACCOs) to manage savings.

"Our adoption of good farming practices for our banana plantations has greatly improved the quality of wine we produce, boosting our income significantly. At the same time, I harvest honey twice a year, earning approximately UGX 5million, which goes a long way in covering my household needs and school fees for children," noted Venensio Sabiiti, Chairperson of the Buzenga Environmental Conservation Association.

In Kasyoha-Kitomi and Echuya landscapes, the critical role of schools in confronting the impacts of climate change is recognized. NatureUganda is working with three schools in the Kasyoha-Kitomi and Echuya landscapes, to demonstrate climate smart initiatives. About 1,600 school children establish and manage tree nurseries and later distribute seedlings to their parents. They also carry out demonstrations on how to use energy saving stoves at school and transfer the knowledge for replication at home. In addition, they support awareness raising of the initiative through song, dance and role play.

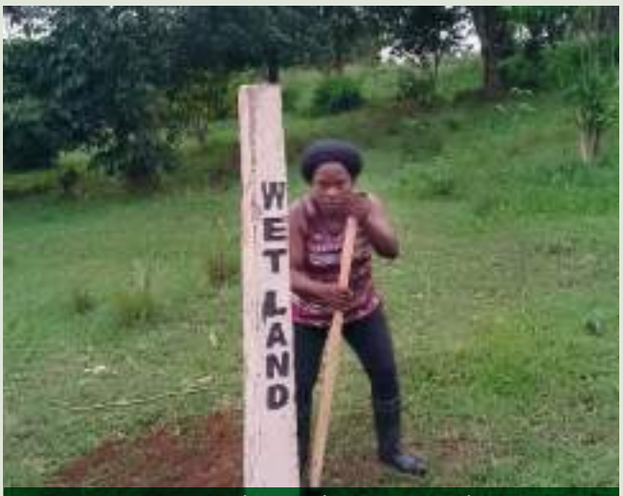
"These interventions are beginning to bear fruit. Recent surveys of canopy cover at Kasyoha-Kitomi stood at 96% having risen from a low 70% in 2013. The cardinal role played by the CFMs is very invaluable. Such interventions are worth scaling up and replicated if the rate of forest depletion and its attendant consequences are to be managed", concludes Muheebwa.

Wetland Demarcation in Mid-Albertine Rift Region: A Milestone in Restoration and Conservation of wetlands in Refugee-hosting Districts

NatureUganda (NU), under the EU-funded project "Restoration and Conservation of Degraded Fragile Ecosystems," has supported the conservation of wetlands in refugee hosting districts of Terego, Kamwenge and Kyegegwa districts. This significant achievement marks a vital step in the ongoing efforts to restore and conserve degraded wetland ecosystems in Uganda especially areas settled with refugees. The project's goal is to enhance the ecological integrity of wetlands, improve community livelihoods, and ensure sustainable environmental management practices.

NU supported the local government of Kamwenge and Kyegegwa Districts to demarcate 35km of wetland boundaries in the refugee hosting areas including wetlands of kajororo, Rushango, Kyakatwanga,and Komuchwezi. The wetland demarcation exercise included community sensitization, mapping and marking wetland boundaries and installation of permanent reinforced concrete markers/ pillars. Demarcating wetlands clearly defines wetland boundaries and buffer zones, which helps to regulate human activities within wetland areas, thereby protecting these fragile ecosystems from further degradation. Prior to the demarcation exercise, NatureUganda conducted extensive sensitization campaigns to educate local communities about the relevance of wetlands and their ecological and socio-economic functions and the need for restoration. The critical roles wetlands play include biodiversity conservation, water purification, and flood control. Wetlands also support community livelihoods as a water source, agriculture support and irrigation, source of various materials including food and fishing. The campaigns also addressed the drivers of wetland degradation and existing laws and policies, encouraging communities to adopt wise use approaches for sustainable wetland management.

In particular, we successfully demarcated a total of 74km of wetland boundaries across Kajororo (1590ha), Rushango (503ha), Kyakatwanga (77ha), and Komuchwezi (127ha), marking a significant step in conserving these vital ecosystems. The demarcation exercise was a success because of the holistic approach used to ensure that all stakeholders were involved. The stakeholders included local government of Kamwenge and Kyegegwa, NatureUganda, Ministry of Water and Environment community leaders and the local communities adjacent to the wetlands. Despite the registered success, the wetland demarcation exercise was not short of challenges. The demarcation exercise was led by the district authorities with support from all departments and security agencies. Whereas boundary determination in some areas was difficult especially during the dry season,



A woman compacting the soil around a newly installed pillar during the wetland demarcation exercise

the baseline biodiversity assessments conducted helped to provide ecological definition of wetland edges based on availability of certain species of plants and some animal species. This everted intervention by local leaders and resolved conflicting accounts of wetland boundaries. Wetland demarcation is expected to have a profound impact on the long-term conservation and sustainability of wetlands in Kamwenge and Kyegegwa. Clearly defined boundaries and buffer zones will help mitigate anthropogenic pressures, allowing the ecosystems to recover and play their ecological and socio-economic functions. Additionally, the enhanced awareness and education provided to local communities will promote wise-use practices and sustainable utilization of wetland resources.

By conserving and restoring wetlands, NatureUganda is helping to ensure the continued provision of essential ecosystem services, such as water filtration, flood regulation, and habitat for diverse species. These efforts align and contribute to the implementation of the District Action Plans and the Water and Environment Sector Response Plan for refugees and host communities in Uganda.

Through strategic planning, community engagement, and collaborative partnerships, NatureUganda has set a strong foundation for the sustainable management of wetlands in Uganda. The long-term benefits of these efforts will be seen in the improved health of wetland ecosystems, enhanced community livelihoods, and strengthened environmental stewardship for generations to come.

Compiled by Anke Barahukwa and Nicholas Niwamanya

Three new chameleon species discovered in Uganda

A team of researchers including Dr Behangana a Research Associate at NatureUganda, recently discovered new species of chameleons as they carried out research in different forests and mountains of Uganda. The three new species described for Uganda are- ***Rhampholeon nalubaale*** from Kibale National Park, ***Rhampholeon plumptrei*** from Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, and ***Rhampholeon monteslunae*** from Rwenzori Mountains National Park. The species were teased out of the Pygmy chameleon group - ***Rhampholeon boulengeri***, that was shown to contain six genetically distinct species using DNA analysis *(Read Hughes & Behangana et al, 2024).*

The three new chameleon species, added to the Ugandan checklist of reptiles, raises the number of chameleons from 13 to 16 species. Chameleons in ecosystems are known to eats lots of bugs thus controlling pests and parasites. Their unique ability to change colors has made them highly sought after as pets. Recently, they have become the second most traded pet animals, following birds. Additionally, chameleons offer significant potential for ecotourism.

These pygmy chameleons usually live on the forest floor and "exhibit traits closely mimicking a dead leaf."

A Rhampholeon nalubaale, or goddess pygmy chameleon, perchedon a branch

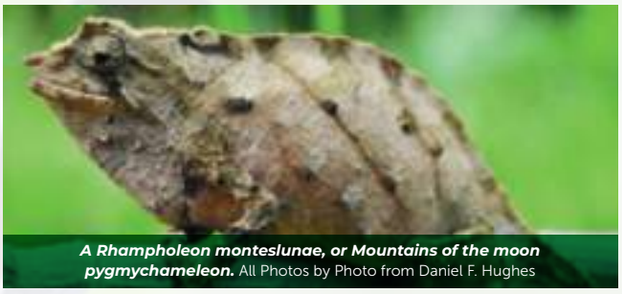
Goddess pygmy chameleons have been found in lowland forests of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda, two neighboring countries in central Africa.

The researchers said they named the new species "Nalubaale," a Luganda word meaning "a spirit of feminine qualities."

A Rhampholeon plumptrei, or Plumptre's pygmy chameleon

This species has a very large geographic distribution from eastern DRC (Kahuzi-Biega National Park) to western Kenya (Kakamega Forest National Reserve), including its occurrence in several protected areas (e.g., Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda and Mabira Forest.

Researchers said they named the new species after Andrew Plumptre "for his efforts in promoting the conservation of Albertine Rift biodiversity and whose leadership with the Wildlife Conservation Society has inspired scientists."



A Rhampholeon monteslunae, or Mountains of the moon pygmychameleon. All Photos by Photo from Daniel F. Hughes

The species is found in montane forests at an elevation range of 1655–2360m including Rwenzori Mountains National Park Bururi Forest Nature Reserve of Burundi.

The name ***R. monteslunae*** is derived from the Latin words for mountain, ***mons,*** and moon, ***luna,*** in reference to the original phrase for the Rwenzori Mountains, ***montes lunae,*** or "Mountains of the Moon".

The research team in Uganda comprised of Dr. Mathias Behangana Dr. Daniel Hughes, and Mr.Wilber Lukwago. Dr. Mathias Behangana and Dr. Daniel Hughes have been working on Herpetofaunal Conservation Assessment of Uganda since 2015.

The Chameleons of Uganda – New List

Savannah Chameleons *(Chamaeleo)*

1. Slender Chameleon ***(Chamaeleo gracilis)***
2. Smooth Chameleon ***(Chamaeleo laevigatus)***

Forest Chameleons (Kinyongia)

3. Tolley's Forest Chameleon ***(Kinyongia tolleyae)***
4. Rwenzori Plate-nosed Chameleon ***(Kiunyongia xenorhina)***
5. Rwenzori Helmeted Chameleon ***(Kionyongia carpenteri)***

Side-striped Chameleons (Trioceros)

6. Side-striped Chameleon ***(Trioceros bitaeniatus)***
7. Sudanese Unicorn Chameleon ***(Trioceros conirostratus)***
8. Elliot's Groove-throated Chameleon ***(Trioceros ellioti)***
9. Kenyan High-casqued Chameleon ***(Trioceros hoehnelii)***
10. Ituri Forest Chameleon ***(Trioceros ituriensis)***
11. Johnston's Three-horned Chameleon ***(Trioceros johnstoni)***
12. Rwenzori Bearded Chameleon ***(Trioceros rudis)***

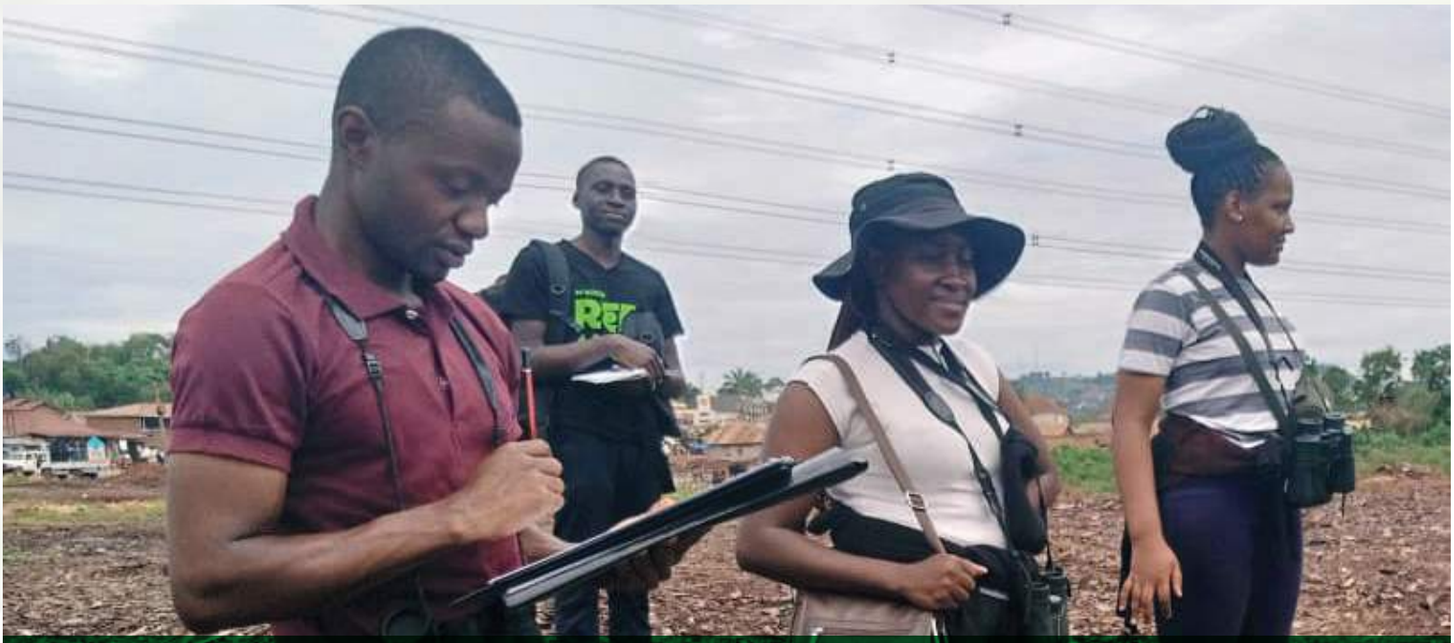
Pygmy Chameleons (Rhampholeon)

13. Boulenger's Pygmy Chameleon *(Rhampholeon boulengeri)*

- Goddess Pygmy Chameleon *(Rhampholeon nalubaale)* New species
- Plumptre's Pygmy Chameleon *(Rhampholeon plumptrei)* New species
- Mountains of the Moon Pygmy Chameleon *(Rhampholeon monteslunae)* New species

Compiled by Dr. Mathias Behangana

The Locally-based Monitoring (LbM) Initiative; Engaging Site-based Communities in research and monitoring



NatureUganda team conducting a biodiversity assessement of Lubigi Wetland

In an effort to preserve biodiversity and foster environmental stewardship, NatureUganda is promoting Locally-based Monitoring (LbM) program in selected forests and wetlands in Uganda. This citizen science initiative empowers local community members to actively participate in biodiversity research and monitoring efforts, creating a model for sustainable environmental management.

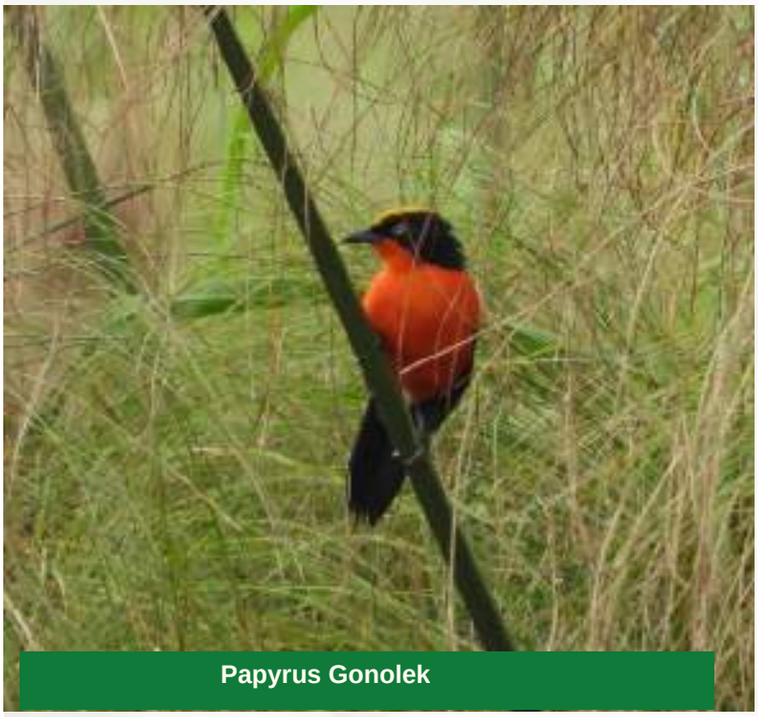
Locally-based Monitoring (LbM) of natural resources refers to the practice of monitoring and managing natural resources at the community or local level. This approach recognizes that local communities often have a deep understanding of their environment, traditional knowledge, and vested interest in sustainable resource management. By involving local communities in monitoring and management processes, it is believed that more effective, sustainable, and equitable outcomes can be achieved.

In Lubigi Wetland, located in Kampala city, is one of Uganda's most critical ecosystems. The wetland is highly biodiverse with over 200 plant species, 150 bird species, 20 mammal species and several amphibian and reptile species, making it a vital habitat for both flora and fauna. The wetland also acts as a critical system for water filtration system, flood control and provides essential ecosystem services for the local communities. However, like many wetlands worldwide, Lubigi faces significant pressure from urbanization, pollution, and climate change. Protecting this wetland is critical not only for biodiversity conservation but also for maintaining the ecosystem services and supporting the livelihoods of the people who depend on it.

In order to empower the community to monitor the wetland, a team of eight local community members, (male and female) were trained to participate in the LbM exercise Participants underwent comprehensive training on critical expects such as identification of key species, role of wetlands, the significance of wetlands conservation, and the need to preserve these vital ecosystems. They were also guided in selecting indicator species to monitor, providing essential data on the wetland's health. This data will then be analyzed to identify trends, assess the health of the ecosystem, and inform conservation decisions.

The LbM program is a participatory approach that involves training local community members to monitor and document biodiversity within a site. This initiative leverages the unique knowledge and insights of the local population, ensuring that conservation efforts are grounded in the realities of the area. Lubigi wetland is one area where LbM is being piloted.

The monitoring program established at Lubigi wetland focuses on five major biodiversity groups in the sites selected: birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, insects, and plants. To ensure effective monitoring, participants developed a data collection tool including species names in both English



Papyrus Gonolek

and the local language. This approach facilitates clarity and ease of use by all team members, and leverages indigenous knowledge. To ensure the monitors were well-prepared, NatureUganda facilitated a practical session to test the data collection tools. This hands-on practice was critical to fine-tune the tool and assess its performance under real-field conditions. During the practical session, the team selected a 2km transect along Lubigi wetland edge for monitoring, the areas was strategically chosen to provide a comprehensive overview of the wetland's condition and biodiversity. The practical session was instrumental in ensuring that the monitors were well-prepared to conduct the monitoring activities effectively.

The LbM initiative offers numerous benefits, both for the local community and the broader conservation efforts. By involving those who are most familiar with the wetlands, the custodians, the program ensures that conservation strategies are locally relevant and more likely to succeed. The continuous monitoring and data collection will help in tracking changes over time, enabling timely interventions to mitigate adverse impacts on the wetland. By harnessing the knowledge and enthusiasm of local communities, the LbM approach holds great promise for protecting vital ecosystems and ensuring a sustainable future.

Compiled by Micheal Kibuule

Musambwa Islands: **Where Culture Meets Biodiversity Conservation**

The Musambwa Islands, located in Lake Victoria within Rakai District, represent a unique convergence of cultural heritage and ecological importance. The island derives its name from 'musambwa,' meaning 'spirits' or 'gods,' and its revered population of snakes, regarded by locals as sacred beings rather than ordinary reptiles. This spiritual reverence is anchored around the Ficus ovata tree (Mukokoowe in the local language), which, according to the local community, hosts the island's main shrine a sacred place for spiritual healers and the community members to seek blessings and healing.

Musambwa Islands are a haven for birdlife, home to over 150,000 birds and recognized as the largest breeding ground for Grey-Headed Gulls in Africa (Byaruhanga et al. 2001; Musinguzi B, 2024). The surrounding rocks, bushes, and water serve as critical habitats for breeding, nesting, and roosting for a variety of species.

Uniquely, the island is inhabited exclusively by men who live harmoniously with the snakes and birds, both considered sacred and protected from harm. "If you kill a snake or bird, you risk death or misfortune," says Mutumbavu, the oldest surviving member of the local island community. Cultural traditions strictly prohibit women from staying overnight, and men are required to leave the island for intimate relations, reflecting a deeply rooted belief system that honors the spirits residing there. NatureUganda has been conducting bi-annual bird population surveys on the Musambwa Islands since 2006. During the latest survey on January 23, 2025, our research team recorded 8,248 individuals representing twelve bird species. The most abundant species included the Grey-Headed Gull (6,140), Long-Tailed Cormorant (1,435), and Greater Cormorant (623). Other notable species observed were the Pink-backed Pelican and Slender-billed Gull.

Despite the island's rich cultural and ecological significance, its tourism potential remains largely underutilized. Currently, a small number of visitors engage in activities such as bird and reptile watching. Unlocking the full tourism potential of Musambwa Islands requires a collaborative, multi-sectoral approach to promote sustainable ecotourism while preserving its cultural and ecological integrity.

Musambwa Islands is an example of how traditional beliefs can align with conservation practices to protect biodiversity. By honoring the sacredness of their natural inhabitants, the local community has created a safe haven for species that are vital to the region's ecological balance.

Compiled by Violet Kantono

Embracing Regenerative Tourism as the Next Step in Sustainable Tourism: Lessons from The Great Outdoors Kalanamu in Uganda

NatureUganda members at The great outdoors, Kalanamu, Gayaza

Tourism contributes 5.9% of Uganda's GDP (2019) and employment in the sector is estimated by the World Bank at around 670,000 (7.4% of the Uganda labour force). "The Pearl of Africa" Uganda's tourism industry revenue is expected to reach $1.5 billion in 2024, exceeding pre-pandemic levels. An international tourism agency, Bradt Guides, has ranked Uganda as the fourth place on Earth to visit in 2024. The Agency places Uganda behind Switzerland, Antarctica and the Falkland Islands, and ahead of Madagascar (fifth position) and Zanzibar (seventh), the only African destinations featured in the top 13 destinations of 2024. Tourism has major environmental impacts such as biodiversity loss, landscape impact, waste and water scarcity and social impacts such as over tourism, gentrification and social uprising. This is worsened by the global challenges we face today, including climate change, loss of biodiversity, and social inequality. The COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the fragility of traditional tourism models, revealing the need for resilient, adaptable, and sustainable approaches to travel and tourism. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's SDG target 8.9 seeks to "by 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products."

However, the traditional tourism model, characterized by mass travel and its focus on maximizing visitor numbers and profits, has led to a range of negative impacts on both the environment and local communities. As tourism footprints expand, the need to address these unsustainable practices has become increasingly urgent. Regenerative tourism emerges as a compelling solution, offering a way to transform the industry into a catalyst for positive change. Organizations like Regenerate Africa are championing regenerative practices in all aspects of development. Regenerate Africa works closely with the Great Outdoors to ensure regenerative tourism practices across its operations.

The Great Outdoors in Kalanamu, Gayaza, Uganda is modelling "regenerative tourism". Regenerative tourism is an innovative approach that extends beyond the conventional goals of minimizing tourism's negative impacts, aiming instead to actively improve and rejuvenate the destinations where it operates. This approach is rooted in a deep respect for nature and local cultures, emphasizing not only the preservation but to contribute positively to the regeneration of local ecosystems, economies, and social structures and the enhancement of these vital resources for future generations.

NatureUganda members visited the Great Outdoors, to explore and document the rich biodiversity of the area. This visit was more than just an expedition; it was a celebration of the intricate web of life that sustains our planet. The primary focus was on documenting birds, plants, and reptiles, contributing to the preservation of our natural heritage. The team from NatureUganda took on the significant task of mapping out various bird species. Each flutter of a bird's wing served as a poignant reminder of the biodiversity that thrives within this ecosystem. Mr. Mutesasira Leonard led the team on an educational tour, sharing his extensive knowledge about different tree species. His expertise provided invaluable insights into the flora of the Great Outdoors, enriching the team's understanding of the area's botanical diversity.

Additionally, Dr. Hafashimana, a renowned plant taxonomist at Regenerate Africa, educated the members from NatureUganda about various plant species. His detailed explanations and profound knowledge greatly enhanced the team's understanding of the botanical diversity present in the area. The visit resulted in several notable achievements. First, the biodiversity documentation effort significantly enhanced the scientific database with new data on bird, tree, and plant species. This new information is crucial for understanding and conserving the area's rich biodiversity. Second, the insights gained from this documentation will inform future conservation efforts and strategies, ensuring that these natural resources are preserved for future generations. Finally, the educational value of the visit cannot be overstated. It offered an immersive learning experience for participants, fostering a deeper understanding of the ecosystem and the importance of conservation.

The Great Outdoors sets powerful examples of how tourism can be a force for positive change where regenerative principles are being successfully implemented, demonstrating the practical applications and outcomes of this innovative approach. As the world becomes increasingly aware of the environmental, economic, and social impacts of tourism, the shift towards regenerative practices represents a hopeful pathway to a more sustainable future. The Great Outdoors should inspire other destinations to adopt regenerative tourism not merely as a trend but a necessary evolution in response to the urgent global challenges we face. Embracing this model is essential for ensuring that travel remains a source of joy and discovery for future generations, while also safeguarding the natural and cultural treasures upon which it depends, ensuring that tourism can be a sustainable and positive force for generations to come.

Compiled by Doreen Naiga

Unusual sightings

The Bruce's Green Pigeon *(Treron waalia)* and the African Green Pigeon *(Treron calvus)* perched together in a tree in Iriri, Napak District, Uganda. The Bruce's Green Pigeon, occurs in arid and semi-arid regions while the African Green Pigeon occurs in agro-forest landscapes. Their coexistence in Napak, a semi-arid area, suggests the presence of overlapping resources, making it a unique observation

Baillon's Crake *(Zapornia pusilla)*, recorded in Doho Rice Scheme, Butaleja District: The 1st documented record for Uganda since 1993. This species is known for its preference for densely vegetated wetlands, where it often remains hidden, making sightings rare and noteworthy.

Baillon's Crake's nest containing eggs - Doho Rice Scheme: The 1st breeding record for Uganda. This observation is particularly noteworthy as it represents the first documented nesting record of this species in Uganda since 1993.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Scientific Conservation Conference: 2025 (Dates to be communicated)**
- **Annual General Meeting: 29th, May 2025**
- **Waterfowl Counts and Bird Population Monitoring: 1st – 31st July**
- **Excursion to Queen Elizabeth National Park: 29th – 31st August**

CORPORATE MEMBERS

- Uganda Wildlife Authority
- Uganda Tourism Board
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Kigambira Safari Lodge
- Bunyonyi Safaris Ltd
- Venture Uganda Ltd
- Green and Lush Adventures Ltd
- Jane Goodall Institute Uganda
- The Great Outdoors
- Pride Microfinance Ltd
- Papyrus Forest Uganda Tours Ltd

INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS

- Atacama Consulting
- Bwindi Bird Club
- Green Hill Academy
- Kasheregenyi Friends Group
- Hill preparatory School
- Balibaseka Secondary School
- Kampala International University
- Mabamba Wetland Users Association
- Mpanga Nature Centre
- Makerere University Conservation Biology Association
- Uganda Wildlife Research and Training Institute

WORKING GROUPS

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

*Nature*Uganda 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	Foreigners
Sponsor	500,000	$1000
Life membership	500,000	$500
Corporate	500,000	$350
Institutional	100,000	$90
Family	50,000	$30
Full members	50,000	$20
Student member	5,000	$15

The BirdLife INTERNATIONAL partner in Uganda and a member of IUCN

JOIN US! — TODAY —

For more information, Contact

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