MORE GIRAFFES TRANSLOCATED TO PIAN UPE WILDLIFE RESERVE

Giraffes being translocated to Pian Upe Wildlife Reserve from Murchison Falls National Park

Uganda Wildlife Authority December 4, 2020, successfully concluded the second phase of Giraffe reintroduction to Pian Upe Wildlife reserve. The exercise saw 15 giraffes; 4 males and 11 females translocated from Murchison Falls national park and released into the reserve. The Second phase of giraffe re-introduction brings the number of giraffes taken to the reserve to 29 following the translocation of 14 giraffes in phase one last year.

The reintroduction of giraffes in Pian Upe Wildlife Reserve is in line with UWA’s strategic objectives among which is the reintroduction of extinct species. This exercise addresses one of our key conservation objectives of restoring and managing viable populations of extinct or endangered species. The Executive Director UWA Sam Mwandha expressed satisfaction that the exercise concluded successfully saying that the translocation enhances the tourism potential of Pian Upe Wildlife Reserve.

“This batch of giraffes adds on the 14 that we translocated last year. We already have Impalas to into the reserve and our efforts to protect the wildlife in the reserve have resulted to increase in numbers of Roan Antelope, Eland, Zebra, Hartebeest, and Cheetah among others”.

The three-week translocation exercise will enhance the long-term survival of the species; restore natural biodiversity and long-term economic benefits to the entire wildlife conservation value chain. It will also enable communities with cultural attachment to the giraffe to participate in its conservation, enhance the conservation value of Pian Upe Wildlife Reserve by reintroducing one of its indigenous species that had become extinct and diversify tourism products with associated ecological and economic benefits, re-enforce/supplement dwindling populations to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem balance. The translocation was being under taken with support from the Giraffe Conservation Foundation and Chayenne Mountain Zoo in the United States. Uganda Wildlife Conservation Education Centre (UWEC) and Makerere University are also participating in the exercise.

Pain Upe Wildlife Reserve is the largest Wildlife Reserve and the second largest Protected Area (after MFNP) in Uganda, covering an area of 2,043 km2. It was established by a Statutory Instrument (SI) No. 220 of 1964 and amended by SI No. 136 of 1965 as a reserve. It is located in Nakapiripirit and Amudat districts and bordered by Napak, Katakwi, Kumi, Kween, Bulambuli and Bukeea districts.
INVESTIGATION STAFF EQUIPPED WITH MOBILE CRIME SCENE KITS

Space for giants on Tuesday, November, 2020 donated 18 mobile crime scene kits to Uganda Wildlife Authority’s Investigation unit to assist in management and handling of crime scenes while investigating wildlife crime related issues. The handover was witnessed by Deputy Director Field Operations (DDFO) Charles Tumwesigye, Deputy Director Legal and Corporate Affairs (DDCLA) Chemonges Sabilla and Col. Kyangungu Allan on behalf of UWA. Space for Giants was represented by Rod Potter, Justus Karuhanga and Tusubira Justus. Each mobile crime kit comprises of 29 items that include a digital camera, high tech scanner and digital weighing scale among others.

At the handover at UWA headquarters, DDLCA appreciated Space for Giants for the great partnership that UWA has enjoyed with the organisation over the years that is not limited to that donation but also trainings and interventions aimed to protect wildlife. On behalf of Space for Giants, Mr. Karuhanga thanked UWA for being steadfast in conservation management and indicated that this was only the beginning of the great journey where conservation will emerge winner.

Representing UWA Executive Director, Mr. Charles Tumwesigye thanked Space for Giants for giving wildlife protection priority in funding. He observed that UWA has had a long partnership with the organisation that begun with identification of investment opportunity in protected areas. He noted that the same organisation piloted funding for establishment of electric fence in Queen Elizabeth and Murchison Falls National Parks to reduce on the rampant Human Wildlife Conflicts. “They have now come in another area i.e. investigation and intelligence. Am grateful that this equipping of our investigation staff has come in timely. We have just recruited and trained them. This equipment therefore will come in handy,” he said.
UGANDA CELEBRATES ONE HEALTH AWARENESS

Celebrations to mark the annual World One Health Day 2020 were held at Imperial Royale hotel on 3rd Tuesday, 2020. One Health is an interdisciplinary strategy that addresses health issues from an integrated perspective that includes Humans, Wildlife and Environment.

The Chief Guest Ag. Permanent Secretary Dr. Florence Adong Ministry of Water and Environment in her remarks appreciated the support from Development Partners who have made the implementation of the One Health Strategy possible. She underscored the importance of this year’s celebration as one that draws attention of the global community of the need to have One Health approach to address shared health threats.

She observed that the year’s theme “Strengthening National One Health Practice, A Call for Advocacy and Action” was timely. She noted that the globe needed to recognize that the health of people is closely connected to the health of animals and their shared environment Therefore, One Health was not limited to public or animals but also the environment. Present to grace the celebration were Dr. Monica Musenero, Presidential Advisor on Epidemics, Chair One Health Collins Oloya, ED UWA Sam Mwandha and Director Animal resources MAAIF Dr. Juliet Sentubwe.

The celebrations brought together the responsible government agencies, One Health practitioners, development partners, One health advocates, researchers, academia, local and international organizations. These shared best practices, explored contributions of One Health towards achievement of Sustainable Development Goals and reviewed mainstreaming of One Health in national and sub-national operations in a series of presentations and discussion by various speakers.

In his address, the Executive Director Uganda Wildlife Authority Mr. Sam Mwandha decried environmental degradation that has orchestrated the destruction of forests, wetlands, wildlife poaching and irresponsible garbage disposal especially “kaveras and other plastics” undermining soil fertility and productivity.

He noted that communication, coordination and collaboration among partners working in wildlife, livestock, human and environmental health as well as other relevant partners are an essential part of the One Health approach. “Working together allows us to have the biggest impact on improving health for both people and animals living in a shared environment,” he said.

Dr. Monica Musenero, the Presidential Advisor on Epidemics in her remarks noted that the development of the National One Health Policy is yet another milestone in streamlining the One Health approach in government. She noted that COVID–19 pandemic was an example One Health approach that recognizes the close connection between the health of people, animals and the environment and the role this connection plays in the emergence of new diseases. “Fighting disease threats like COVID–19 requires One Health collaboration because no one person, organization, or sector alone can effectively address the pandemic,” she said.
UGANDA WILDLIFE AUTHORITY GETS EQUIPMENT

Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) has today received support from African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) of additional 17 off-road motor cycle bikes, 07- boda boda cycles, 300 one-man tents and 300 sleeping mats to facilitate ranger enforcement of the national parks through funds secured from USAID. The funds are part of the COVID-19 relief money to the tune of $50,000 from USAID. On behalf of UWA – Executive Director, Mr. Mugisa Jimmy Director Finance thanked AWF for the support. He noted that UWA’s revenue has significantly dropped making it hard to implement many planned core activities of the organisation. The donation would therefore go miles to ensure that the conservation agenda continues unhindered despite the pandemic effects.

The Chief Executive Officer of AWF Kaddu Sebunya in his remarks noted that USAID has been a great donor and partner with the institution since that time UWA was known as National Parks and Game Department. He said that conservation efforts are critical globally because people’s survival also depends on how well the universe is conserved. He explained that conservation has taken a big hit with the dwelling number of foreign visitors as a result of the pandemic. “The silver lining is that domestic tourism is increasing despite the big blow registered for international guests who have stopped visiting the country as a result of the pandemic. He thanked UWA for the efforts to bring in Ugandans into the parks,” he noted.

The Chairman Board of Trustees Prof. Panta Kasoma appreciated the efforts of AWF in aiding conservation and standing by it in these difficult times. He retaliated that COVID-19 was a big blow to the organization because the bulk of funds come from the tourism. “Since it’s unclear at this time when the pandemic will end, the foreign guests’ numbers are still expected to be low because the source markets are still heavily affected. It’s is therefore a period of uncertainty,” he acknowledged.

Prof. Panta emphasized that the equipment would come in handy to improve the enforcement activities in the national parks. “When there was a lock down, we realised a spike in illegal activities. There is therefore a lot the organization has to contend with in fulfilment of its mandate to keep all the wildlife safe. With this kind of assistance, it’s applaudable because this equipment is critical in putting the man power where it’s needed most,” he said. He retaliated UWA’s commitment to continue working with communities to gazette wildlife because the community partnership was very important for UWA. He pointed out Bwindi Impenetrable National Park where communities relate with gorillas as their resource because of the benefits the communities derive from their conservations and argued that the practice is replicated in all the conservation areas.

The BoT Chair revealed therefore that all conservation practices will be used to supplement each one of them to achieve maximum benefits for the country. He argued people to visit the parks more and bolster domestic tourism because Uganda is a well-endowed and beautiful country. He ended by arguing AWF to continue with its efforts to aid conservation and Just like Oliver Twist of the old, UWA still needs some more help.

The Chairman UWA Board of Trustees Prof. Panta Kasoma receives donated equipment from Chief Executive Officer AWF Kaddu Sebunya.
UWA COMPLETES BEAUTIFICATION OF KIRA ROAD WITH WILDLIFE SCULPTURES.

Uganda Wildlife Authority October, 7th, 2020 has completed the beautification of Kira road with wildlife sculptures to bring the beauty and diversity of Uganda’s wildlife heritage closer to the City and promote protected areas as tourism destinations. The Sculptures were unveiled and commissioned today by the Minister of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities (MTWA) Rtd. Col. Hon. Tom Butime.

While unveiling the sculptures, Hon. Butime applauded the initiative noting that it would not only interest Ugandans to visit parks but also improve the look of the city using wildlife which is not only abundant in the country but also an integral part of culture as totems to many Ugandans. “This is a commendable venture from UWA because construction of wildlife images depicting the national parks and national resources that showcase Uganda’s endowment will entice our population to associate with wildlife. It will interest them to visit the national parks because it will form part of the daily remainders of the need to reach the parks,” said Rtd. Col. Butime.

The Chairman UWA Board of Trustees Dr. Pantaleon Kasoma expressed hope Ugandans walking or driving along this street, will become interested in wildlife and its conservation; because it is on them that the future of our natural resources rests.

The Executive Director KCCA Dorothy Kisaka thanked UWA for making city vibrant and asked everyone to market Kampala as a beautiful city. “It’s nice to bring some Wild in the city. I wish to thank UWA for bringing the sculptures to educate our city dwellers of tourism. We should market Kampala and Uganda as a beautiful city. Let’s take selfies and appreciate the great work,” she said.

The Executive Director UWA Sam Mwandha was glad that after the long wait with construction processes, the sculptures have been unveiled. “The institution has chosen representative images that depict nature with animals to showcase our country’s rich and diverse endowment. We hope Ugandans and visitors who come to Uganda can visit the parks to enjoy the rich heritage,” he said. The bronze sculptures do not only enhance the image of a modern city but also promote wildlife conservation and tourism. The monuments constructed include:

- Lion – Climbing Lion in Queen Elizabeth National Park, as the Park with over 2,000 buffalos in one Herd
- Elephant – Murchison Falls National Park
- Zebra – Lake Mburo National Park
- Mt. Gorilla – Bwindi Impenetrable National Park
- Giraffe – Rothschild Giraffe in Kidepo Valley National Park, Murchison Falls National Park & Lake Mburo National Park
- Shoe Bill – Semuliki, the Birders Haven
- Chimpanzee – Kibale National Park
- Hippopotamus – Aquatic Life in the Parks
- Crested Crane – National Bird

The event was attended by Chief Executive Director Uganda Tourism Board Lilly Ajarova and representatives of the Private sector among others.

Other monuments located in the city include the Mountain gorilla placed at Colline House on Nile Avenue and Impalas at Jubilee Building on Kimathi Avenue.

The beautification exercise follows the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between UWA and Kampala City Council Authority (KCCA) in October 2016 to jointly promote Kampala City as a tourism gateway.
UWA & NFA TO GET WORLD BANK FUNDS

The government of Uganda is negotiating World Bank funding to a tune of $148.2 over six-year period towards investment in forest protected areas for Climate Smart Environment. As part of fundraising the required resources, World Bank approached some partners to make funding available for habitat and ecosystem protection. As a result, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) agreed to separately extend an additional grant to Uganda Wildlife Authority and National Forestry Authority to be shared equally to a tune of $2.3 million dollars for a period of two years to finance activities that support protection of the environment under their mandates.

The resources for Uganda Wildlife Authority are earmarked to specifically go to Protected Area Biodiversity support. These funds will therefore support law enforcement like deployment of the ranger force to do more patrols, fire management initiatives, community livelihood projects and Human Wildlife Conflict in the Albertine rift of Murchison Falls National Park, Queen Elizabeth and Toro-Semuliki. The funds will also be used to develop the eco-tourism initiatives in the Kingdom of Bunyoro and Toro in the region.

The Executive Director Uganda Wildlife Authority Sam Mwandha is optimistic that the funds will offer the much-needed money to ensure protected areas are kept safe following the heavy drop in revenue since the outbreak of COVID-19 in March. “The funds will ensure that we do even more close monitoring and patrols to keep our parks safe and deter any illegal activities like poaching,” he said.

Under the $148.2 million funding, the Ministry of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities will be supported to carry out its administrative and supervisory roles together with the Ministry of Water and Environment as they oversee implementation of the different projects earmarked for support. The broader aspects envisaged in this phase of funding will include infrastructural development of the Protected Areas, procurement of equipment to support construction and maintenance of roads, increase the coverage of the electric fences and other human wildlife conflict interventions like trenches among many others. The communities will also be supported to improve their livelihood, improve their tourism facilities among many others.

UWA WAIVES ANNUAL FIXED FEES FOR CONCESSIONAIRES

Uganda Wildlife Authority on December 4, 2020, waived annual fixed fees for concessionaires operating tourism related businesses in various protected areas under her jurisdiction. The measure is intended to offer relief to concessionaires following the heavy impact of COVID-19 on tourism businesses which threatened a number of investors with closure due to lack of business.

The UWA Executive Director Sam Mwandha noted that as Uganda continues to manage the impacts of COVID-19, the authority appreciates the challenges concessionaires have faced during this period. “We are pleased to announce a 100% relief on Annual fixed fees accruing from March 2020 up to June 2021 as a relief package for their business that have been impacted by the COVID19 pandemic,” says Mwandha. He adds that for those concessionaires who had already made payments for this period, the waiver will be applied in the next financial year.

This waiver only applies to tourism concessions that were in operation at the time of the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2020. Concessions that were not operational at the time of the outbreak of COVID-19 and those that are not related to tourism are not eligible to receive the relief.

In the same spirit, tenants at the Wildlife Tower have also been given a 50% waiver on rent for four months from April to July. Concessionaire pay an annual fixed fee to the authority towards supporting conservation activities in protected areas where they have tourism related investments. Concessions are one of the ways through which UWA gets funds to support wildlife conservation activities. Concession sites are earmarked during the development of General Management Plans and advertised as investment opportunities.
ACCOUNTANTS TRAINED IN IFMS

The Uganda Wildlife Authority finance gurus have concluded training in the use of Integration Financial Management System (IFMS) to migrate from manual to automation use to reduce on mistakes but also achieve timely reporting. The training which brought together 43 accountants from all the UWA conservation areas began on 7th – 15th December, 2020.

Areas covered included cash requisitions, payments vouchers of staff imprests and accountabilities, accounting treatment for payroll statutory deductions, treatment of contractor advances and retentions, VAT & WHT (withholding tax), Bank transactions, grants, generating sales invoices and receipts, procurements from form S, Stock and asset management, capitalization, depreciation and writing off assets, Supplier aging, payables handling, chat of accounts and reporting And generating management reports among others.

The UWA Director Finance Jimmy Mugisa noted that the system will bring about efficiency in making provision of accurate and timely reports for management action since the system is being upgraded from manual to computer aided. He implored on the accounts to adopt to the new trends and ensure that reporting is done timely.

INTELLIGENCE UNIT STAFF COMMISSIONED

Uganda Wildlife Authority on 30th October passed out yet another intake of 20 Intelligence staff at Uganda People’s Defence Forces School of Military Intelligence and Security in Migyera. This was the first phase of the 100 that will be trained. The specialised training by UPDF equipped the trainees with critical skills in analysis and critical thinking. The capacity building done in the ranger force is hoped to deal poaching a huge blow and any form of insecurity in our protected areas. The course was intended to enhance skills in of the trainees in Critical thinking, analysis and report writing to support decision making in the organisation. The intention is for the leaners to practically apply the skills attained in the field to combat wildlife crime.

While commissioning the staff, Uganda Wildlife Authority Executive Director Sam Mwandha emphasized that Uganda’s Tourism was nature based and therefore its success depended on conservation of wildlife among other factors such as security and good infrastructure. He explained that until the effects of COVID-19, tourism was the leading foreign exchange earner in the country.

He argued the trainees not to get distracted when they complete their training by thinking only about a promotion and emphasized that only critical thinkers and those who try to analyse issues are the ones who grow and get promoted.

The Executive Director implored the accounts to work selflessly and emphasized that the team keeps committed and offer timely production of reports to beat deadlines as well as leaving a trail of good performance.

ED UWA Sam Mwandha officially opens Accountants IFMS training at Uganda Museum

Uganda Wildlife Authority

The Executive Director UWA Sam Mwandha who presided over the opening of the week-long workshop implored the accounts to work selflessly and emphasized that the team keeps committed and offer timely production of reports to beat deadlines as well as leaving a trail of good performance.

He explained that until the effects of COVID-19, tourism was the leading foreign exchange earner in the country. We are very optimistic that the industry will recover soon.

The Executive Director observed that much as training was a key component of one’s growth, especially if you are determined to succeed and climb the ranks, it is not all you need to succeed. “You need to also use the knowledge you have gained from the training to show your competence in the assignments you are given. I have followed the planning and preparation as well as the implementation of this training and are aware that your trainers gave guidance to you to be critical thinkers and analytical. One of the weakness of many employees is to stop thinking because they have an Afande, whom they expect to think and analyse every single issue for them,” he noted.

He argued the trainees not to get distracted when they complete their training by thinking only about a promotion and emphasized that only critical thinkers and those who try to analyse issues are the ones who grow and get promoted.
He appreciated WCS and her partners, for the continued tangible support in various areas but specifically towards capacity building and equipping of UWA staff in combating wildlife crime in this country. “When wildlife is safe and criminals are behind bars or have given up their vices, then tourism will thrive, money will flow and all Ugandans will benefit,” he said.

QUEEN ELIZABETH CONSERVATION AREA GETS COVID19 RELIEF ITEMS FROM IFAW

The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) on 12th December, 2020 donated food items to Queen Elizabeth Conservation Area in light of the challenges posed by covid19. This activity was under the Ten Boma project, which is being implemented by IFAW in the greater Virunga region with support from European through IUCN, Netherlands. This donation sought to better the life of the law enforcement staff while conducting their duties in the park. Besides food staff, a number of other items including veterinary equipment was given to Uganda Wildlife Authority and this was aimed at supporting law enforcement activities within the parks in this region to conduct extended patrols during this time of the covid19 pandemic.

Uganda Wildlife Authority’s Margaret Kasumba the Manager Law Enforcement on behalf of UWA appreciated IFAW for complementing the organization’s efforts to ensure a safe habitat for wildlife in Uganda. She applauded the efforts to keep the staff morale high with good facilitation to do work despite drop in revenue collection as a result of COVID 19 pandemic. “The organization always strives to ensure a better life for employees even during the difficult times caused by this pandemic. We acknowledge the hard work being done by our field rangers during this time and admire their courage for braving the pandemic and not giving up on protecting wildlife,” she emphasized. She noted that poaching had increased during the total lockdown March, 2020 because most community members had resorted to bush meat for survival. She however stated that poaching has declined since the lifting of the total lockdown as many returned to their work with increased patrols and vigilance on the side of UWA.

Moses Olinga, the Project Manager IFAW in Uganda revealed that IFAW was working closely with UWA to ensure that crime against wildlife is curbed. He stated that the items donated in form of cash, equipment and food were to supplement UWA’s efforts in creating a bearable working environment for rangers during this time of the pandemic. He added that IFAW had previously supported training of local communities around the park on prevention of wildlife crime activities which support was also extended to wildlife crime analysts.

The donations were handed over in three different shifts from the period of November, December and January. The donated items included, food stuff, veterinary materials, fuel and money in terms of staff allowances. Olinga explained that in November $US 5250 was disbursed to various parks within the region to aid in law enforcement activities. $US 1205 was given to support intelligence staff and U$SD 600 to support transboundary coordinated patrols. In December a sum of USD 6150 was given to support law enforcement operations, bringing the total amount disbursed in cash to $USD 13,205. Other items given in January include field equipment, 10 GPS units, 30 backpacks, 30 sleeping mats and 13 two-man tents.