Keeping you informed

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Prime Minister: Uganda's Beauty Must be Protected

Uganda joined the rest of the world to celebrate the United Nations World Wildlife Day on March 3, 2019 in Arua District. This year’s celebrations were under the global theme “Life below water for people and planet.” In Uganda the national theme was “Harmonious living between wildlife and people.”

The Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Ruhakana Rugunda represented President Yoweri Museveni as chief guest during the celebrations at Boma grounds. He urged Ugandans to take conservation seriously because Uganda is among the few uniquely gifted places on earth as a result of its exceptional flora and fauna.

The Prime Minister revealed that Uganda is ranked as one of the world’s top tourism destinations because of its richly endowed spectacular landscapes and a variety of other unique attractions.

Rt. Hon. Rugunda asserted that Uganda is a host a bigger population of the world’s remaining population of mountain gorillas, 11% of the world’s recorded species of birds (which is 50% of Africa’s bird species richness), 8% of the global mammal diversity (which is 39% of Africa’s mammal richness), 19% of Africa’s amphibian species richness, 14% of Africa’s reptile species richness and has recorded a whopping 1,249 species of butterflies, a unique position the country holds.

He said that the Uganda boasts of a wealth of natural heritage that makes it one of the world’s top tourist destinations in Africa and the world. He stressed that tourism is important to Uganda’s economy as it contributes close to 10% of Uganda’s GDP in addition to being the leading foreign exchange earner for Uganda.

Dr. Rugunda said that visitor exports stand at US$1.35 billion (23.5% of the total exports) with a recorded total of 1,302,802 international visitor arrivals. Direct contribution of travel and tourism to GDP stands at Ushs 2.982 trillion (3.7% of total GDP), while the total contribution to GDP is now Ushs 7.27 trillion (9.0% of GDP). Tourism sector provides 1.173 million jobs in Uganda (7.8% of total employment). He also added that part of this revenue is shared with communities surrounding protected areas.

The Prime Minister Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda reading the President’s Speech at WWD19.

The Minister for Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities Prof. Hon. Ephraim Kamuntu urged the region to live harmoniously with wildlife and put a total end to poaching wildlife. He emphasized that wildlife is critical because it contributes heavily to the economic progress of the country. He singled out the benefits that directly can be earned by the communities such as 20% revenue shared when tourists visit protected areas, and that employment is generated among others.

Picking from the global theme Mr. Attilio Pacifici the Ambassador for the European Union encouraged Ugandans to make efforts to care about ocean life even when Uganda is a landlocked country. He said that wildlife greatly depend on water for survival and therefore people need to conserve and protect water and everything in it if they intend to protect wildlife. He elaborated that life below water is the 14th goal of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals which calls for the protection of the world’s oceans, their temperature that drive the global systems that make the earth habitable for human kind.

Mr. Genesis Achema representing the LCS chairman thanked the Ministry of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities for allowing Arua to host the year’s celebration. On behalf of the district, he pledged support for conservation and reiterated the determination the region has to cause mass awareness of the need to keep wildlife thriving. He said that he would discourage the people of Arua from poaching and engaging in illegal wildlife trade. He urged the government to develop routes leading to key tourist attractions in the region like the Aja game reserve.

The celebrations started with a route march in the morning from Arua Primary school to Boma grounds led by a brass band with led by Prof Ephraim Kamuntu and State Minister of Tourism Hon. Godfrey Kiwanda as the main walkers The route march attracted participants from the Ministry of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities Uganda Wildlife Authority, Uganda Wildlife Conservation Education Center, Arua District Local Government a number of conservation partner organizations and school children. was well.
WILDLIFE TEAM LIGHTS UP BERLIN

Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) team formed part of the Ugandan contingent that graced the annual global marketing fair in Berlin– Germany. The UWA team that was led by the Executive Director Mr. Sam Mwandha, consisted of the Director Tourism and Business Services Mr. Stephen Masaba together with the UWA marketing team. The Ugandan contingent was headed by State Minister for Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities Hon. Kiwanda Godfrey and included hotels owners, tourism organizations, tour operators, travel agencies, transport companies and booking portals among others.

While in Berlin the team interacted with potential clients, tour operators and potential tourism business investors to interest them to the country. The beautiful heritage, amazing wildlife and culture about Uganda was showcased leaving other exhibitors and show goers awe-struck and as such, many guests were left motivated to take their first trip to visit the Pearl of Africa. One of the revered moments of the Exhibition goers were the giant gorilla on display that had visitors scamper for photo moments with it.

Besides the mountain gorillas, Uganda is well endowed with abundant wildlife, diverse culture and unique landscape. From the land of milk and honey to the home of a thousand hills right, from the breathtaking scenic snow peaked Rwenzoris to the far East in the beautiful plains of the dry Karamoja plains.

Uganda’s 10 national parks possess beautifully distinct features that can only be appreciated up-close. IT Berlin is the World’s Leading Travel Trade Show for every international expert in the tourism industry. This annual travel expo gathers exhibitors from all over the world to showcase their respective tourism products. Uganda’s participation in the expo is of great significance because it is an opportunity to highlight to the world the diverse wealth of flora and fauna in Uganda. Tourism is currently Uganda’s leading foreign exchange earner, bringing in excess of US$ 1.45 billion (which is 23.5% of the total exports) annually contributing to 10% GDP.

The five-day event was under the theme “Travel Different” and revolved around the new viewpoints on the travel topic such as special packages for weekend trips and life changing journeys. “ITB Berlin is the biggest tourism expo in the world and Uganda should continue attending it for the value that accrues from it to our countries economic growth especially for the purpose of increasing visitor numbers from Europe,” Paul Ninsiima Marketing Manager UWA noted.

The show attracted at least 113,500 trade visitors, an increase of 3% from the previous year. “The five-day exhibition recorded a raise in the trade visitor numbers to 113,500, a three per cent increase compared with last year, underlining the fact that even in times of widespread uncertainty due to geopolitical and economic events such as Brexit and trade conflicts, ITB Berlin has retained its position as the World’s Leading Travel Trade Show,” Ninsiima added.

Uganda’s exhibition stall was characterized by cultural artifacts from across the diverse cultures of Uganda and a number of accolades that Uganda received were reechoed. The cultural outfit won by the exhibitors gave the country an impressive representation.
GOVERNMENT TO RE-STOCK RHINOS IN AJAI WILDLIFE RESERVE

Government is set to restock Ajai Wildlife Reserve with White Rhinos on condition that local people stop poaching and begin to live harmoniously with wildlife. This was revealed by the Minister for Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities Hon. Prof. Ephraim Kamuntu during Celebrations to to mark World Wildlife Day on March 3, 2019 in Arua District.

Prof. Kamuntu promised the people of Arua that White Rhinos will be restocked as soon as their number increases. In the past, Arua district was a home to White Rhinos but were taken to Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary to avoid extinction due to insecurity that threatened their life. “These rhinos will only be brought back if the people begin to live harmoniously with wildlife in Ajai Wildlife Reserve,” the Minister insisted.

The Minister was responding to a request by the Arua District Chairperson Genesis Achema who wanted government to re-stock Ajai wildlife Reserve with White Rhinos so that the local community can benefit from tourism and promote the conservation of wildlife with a greater interest. They have since lived in this Sanctuary very successfully. Currently, rhino numbers are steadily increasing to 26 individuals. Residents of Arua have however insisted that rhinos need to be returned to Arua such.

Mr. Genesis Achema said that Arua is strategically located as a hub connecting other district of West Nile, South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo with a potential of developing as a tourism town because of its many attractions such as the Wali-olewa falls, River Nyanga and the pyramids. He urged the government to work on the roads and so as to provide easy routes leading to these attractions.

He vowed to protect the rhinos once they are returned to Ajai Wildlife Reserve. The cry for white rhinos came out strongly as the rhino used to be the pride of the Lugbara people. The prominence of these rhinos is seen in the rich culture of the Lugbara people. Right from the naming of buildings and places in Arua, one can tell the love for rhinos in this place. One of the places named after the white rhino is the Rhino Camp, which is a home to hundreds of refugees. The locals also stressed the need to start enjoying the benefits from wildlife conservation.

Dr. Akankwasa Barirega, Commissioner Wildlife Ministry of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities noted that once tourism in this region is promoted, tourist numbers will increase and numerous benefits shall be realized. The financial benefits from wildlife that are shared with communities surrounding the park is one way of establishing harmonious coexistence between people and wildlife.
INVESTIGATIONS UNIT TRAINED IN CRIME SCENE MANAGEMENT

Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) Investigations Unit has been equipped to handle and manage wildlife crime investigations. This readiness follows the recent training on wildlife crime scene management training conducted by the International Technical Assistance Program (ITAP) in Kampala. The training was aimed at skilling the officers in handling exhibits, crime scene activities as well as usage of crime scene equipment. This training follows the newly established investigations unit, which is tasked with handling wildlife crime investigations.

Joshua Karamagi Investigations Manager at UWA notes that wildlife crime is becoming a serious subject of concern worldwide and has been a threat to the existing wildlife population. “Uganda joins the rest of the world against this crime and therefore setting up investigation units is just one of the many ways UWA is trying to put an end to wildlife crimes,” he asserted.

In the past, due to lack of awareness, most crimes concerning wildlife were looked at as simple offences compared to other criminal offences. This has been largely as a result of ignoring the wildlife contribution to the economic progress and welfare of the people. Currently however, the wildlife crimes have grown to be the third greatest offence after human and drug trafficking and cannot be taken for granted.

UWA has collaborated with several stakeholders local and internationally to ensure that this crime is dealt a big blow. Among these partners is the Uganda police which has been the forerunner of wildlife crime investigation. The training undertaken by UWA to skill its staff and partners in handling exhibits and crime scene management is essential. Most of them the UWA investigation team has gained the knowledge and skills of carrying out the investigations.

After the successful training, 18 investigation kits were donated to UWA. These kits comprise of cameras, evidence-sealing tapes, rolls of caution tape, DNA sampling kits, open reel metric measuring kits, rubber gloves, evidence seizure tags among others. The availability of kits is envisaged to simplify the investigations and make it possible to gather evidence and prosecute criminals. So far, two training have been undertaken and a number of other training yet to be conducted this year. UWA continuous to create strong synergies with its stakeholder to ensure that wildlife crime is made impossible.
CONSERVATION HEROES AWARDED

Eminent persons in wildlife conservation have been recognized for their tremendous effort to conserve Uganda’s fauna and flora. The recognitions were made on March 3, 2019 during celebrations to mark wildlife day celebrations at Boma grounds in Arua district. The prestigious awards went to the notable conservation personalities and institutions that were given plaques. Among the outstanding personalities was Mrs. Jovia Bushuuti a resident of Masindi who rescued a leopard cub. According to Mrs. Bushuuti, the leopard cub was found lying helpless after a wild fire.

Other wildlife conservation awards included the following categories and winners:

- The Sustainable Protected Area Management Award was given to persons who demonstrated excellence in sustainable conservation in national parks, wildlife reserves, community wildlife area and sanctuaries. Mr. Pontious Ezuma, the Chief Warden Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Area, and Ambassador Patrick Mogoya scooped this award.

- The Wildlife Havens Award went to Hon. Betty Namisango Kamya, the current Minister of Kampala whose services at the time as Executive Director UWEC was recognized as impactful. The award is given to persons whose activities have provided a lifeline to wildlife outside protected areas.

- Atimnedi Patrick Senior Manager Vet services UWA took the Species Recovery Award, an award given distinguished efforts to save and aid recovery of the rare, threatened, endemic, endangered or extinct species. Human Wildlife Harmonious Living Award was given to Mr. Benjamin Otto, the Board Chair Uganda Wildlife Authority, and General Moses Ali 1st Deputy Prime Minister in recognition of their excellence in advancing and innovating human-wildlife conflict mitigation tools and measures, helping to ensure harmonious living between wildlife and people.

- Dr. Simon Nampindo, Country Director WCS scooped the Wildlife Research Award, an award handed to individuals with a record of sustained applied research that informs or has the potential to improve wildlife management, conservation best practices and policy making.

- The Wildlife Conservation Education Award that is given for exceptional audio-visual and media works and programs presenting a sustained effort that influences positive public appreciation and stewardship for wildlife went Violet Kajubiri and Prof Christine Dranzoa of Makerere University.

- UCOTA took the Community Livelihood Awards for for implementing pro-poor wildlife-based alternative income enterprises aimed at alleviating economic and social burdens imposed on communities living in proximity to protected areas.

- The winners of the school quiz competition were also awarded during the ceremony. The interschool conservation challenge is conducted every year to discover how well versed students are with wildlife conservation knowledge. A number of schools ranging from primary, secondary and tertiary levels took part in the competitions. The winners at all levels were unveiled and awarded during this ceremony. Makerere University defended their position as winners in the tertiary institution category. Muni Gals secondary school in Arua emerged first in the secondary school category while Arua public primary school was the winner for the primary category.

Speaking at the function, Minister of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities Professor Ephraim Kamuntu applauded the award winners for the great achievements and encouraged the public to adopt a conservation culture for the benefit of all Ugandans. Professor Kamuntu noted that the competitions are instilling conservation knowledge among the youth will be fundamental in their proper appreciation of conservation of wildlife when they grow up.

State Minister for Tourism, Wildlife & Antiquities Hon. Godfrey Kiwanda handing over a certificate to the winners of the Secondary Schools Quiz.

"The competitions are instilling conservation knowledge among the youth will be fundamental in their proper appreciation of conservation of wildlife when they grow up".

Minister of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities, Professor Ephraim Kamuntu
GIANT PANGOLIN SITED IN ZIWA RANCH

Recently, researchers at Chester Zoo captured "momentous" footage of a rare giant pangolin, revealing new insights into the secretive nocturnal species only found in equatorial Africa. The footage included clips of the creatures in their natural habitat, rooting around in the undergrowth of Uganda's Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary.

One segment shows a pangolin seated on its powerful tail while grasping a tree with its claws and another appears to show a baby clinging to the back of an adult as it rummages through bushes. The footage was captured by 70 motion-sensor trail cameras installed by the zoo at Uganda's Ziwa Rhino sanctuary.

Sam Mwandha, the Executive Director of the Uganda Wildlife Authority described the moment as an exciting one to conservationists. "The rare glimpses into the lives of giant pangolins are very exciting for those of us dedicated to protecting Uganda's rich wildlife and challenges us to ensure that we protect and conserve this highly threatened species for future generations".

The giant pangolin also known as scaly anteaters for their protective armour, is the largest species of pangolins. Pangolins mostly live in the savanna and rainforests. They are solitary animals and only meet to mate once a year. They are nocturnal which makes their observation difficult and spend daytime sleeping curled up in a ball. Because of their poor vision, they rely heavily on smell and hearing.

Pangolins are insectivores. They lack teeth and ability to chew so most of their diet consists of various species of ants and termites which they capture using their long tongues.

Gestation period of Pangolins differs on the species ranging from 70 to 140 days. African pangolins females usually give birth to one offspring at a time. At birth scales are soft and white. They harden and darken after several days.

Pangolin population is so low because of the great destruction of their habitants or deforestation. They are hunted down for their bush meat. Their scales are used for medicinal purposes by local healers.

Pangolins are the most illegally trafficked wildlife species in the world. On 24th Feb 2019, Uganda Revenue Authority captured two Vietnamese nationals with 3.299 tonnes of ivory and pangolin scales worth 423kgs.
PROBLEM ANIMAL TEAM RELOCATES CROCODILES

Uganda Wildlife Authority captured and relocated a crocodile that had wreaked havoc in Tonya A village, Buseruka Sub County, Hoima District. The 850Kg was captured and translocated by UWA's problem animal capture team from Murchison Falls Conservation Area following and it is reported to have eaten about 12 cows belonging to community members, village in Buseruka sub county Hoima district in order to create a safe environment for the community around this region. Often times, animals veer off from protected areas in to community lands destroying livelihoods and threatening the lives of people living in the area.

Such situations often result into conflicts between wildlife and communities and it is for this reason that UWA through its problem animal team rescue and relocate problem animals.

The rescue of this man-eater comes after community members informed the authority about life threatening reptiles ravaging the Nile water near people settlements.

The Nile Crocodile was capture by using a bait of a goat and released in river nile ii Murchison falls national park. In Nakasongola, another crocodile weighing about 700kg and 3.8 meters long was captured from Ninga village Nakasongola district and relocated to Karuma.

Besides crocodiles, a number of other animals such as pythons, lions, leopards and elephants have been reported to stray from the protected areas to community land. In bid to create harmonious living between humans and wildlife, UWA has put in place initiatives aimed at mitigating human wildlife conflict that result from animals straying from protected areas. Such interventions include excavation of trenches, growing chilli, mauritus thorn hedge, and bee hives and lately electric fencing among many other interventions. Areas near the crocodile prone places are advised to draw water from alternative sources like drilling boreholes. Uganda Wildlife Authority however set up the problem animal team with well trained and equipped staff to conduct rescues and offer rapid responses to mitigate wildlife impact in communities. This team uses several methods of capture such as the bait traps and dating when conducting these rescues.

"Mitigation of human-wildlife conflict is an important issue in the management of biodiversity and protected areas. These frontline communities play a major role in the protection and conservation of wildlife. It is for this reason that the UWA problem animal team is always on standby to conduct immediate rescues once called upon," noted Eric Enyeil, Ag. Chief Warden Murchison Falls

Uganda Wildlife Authority has collaborated with Members of the frontline communities to realize the benefits of the co-existence of wildlife and have over the time become key players in wildlife protection. In many occasions, these members have played a role in alerting authorities in case of any human wildlife conflict issues. UWA benefits from the collaboration of such communities making it possible to protect wildlife and conserve it.
FAMILY RESCUES LEOPARD CUB

Ms Bushuutí Jovia from Masindi District scooped an award from Uganda Wildlife Authority for her contribution towards the conservation of Leopards in Murchison Falls Conservation Area. This follows her heroic act of rescuing a leopard cub left behind by its mother and fostering its survival.

The award was handed over to her by the Minister of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities Professor Ephraim Kamuntu on March 3, 2019 during celebrations to mark World Wildlife Day in Arua district.

Professor Kamuntu described Ms Bushuutí as a true conservation hero who demonstrated that people can live harmoniously with wildlife. He urged everybody to borrow a leaf from Ms Bushuutí and show care for wildlife so that we can continue to conserve especially our endangered species.

For more than three days, Mrs. Bushuutí Jovia and her family cared for this vulnerable cub and fed it cow’s milk as they waited for UWA staff to introduce it to its new home. On learning about the cub, Uganda Wildlife Authority immediately dispatched a Problem Animal Rescue Team to ensure its well-being.

Jovia Bushuutí revealed that a wild fire caught up the Papyrus Swamp that borders her home. “It is then that I heard a deep sound of an animal running away from the fire and shortly saw a young cub lying down and crying next to the burning shrub. It is then that I picked it up and brought it at home and started feeding it with cow milk,” she retorted.

According to Mrs. Jovia Busati, this Masindi community has been living in harmony with the mother leopard for a long time. “We have seen this leopard for over 10 years around our home but it is a very peaceful leopard that has never eaten goats or calves,” she narrated.

The Acting Chief Warden for Murchison Falls Conservation Area Enyeil Eric thanked the community for being accommodating and accepting to live peacefully with the wildlife around the park. “We are proud of the community partnerships built and the desire to protect wildlife as seen by the vigilance of the community members. We shall continue to collaborate in order to effectively conserve for the generations to come,” noted Dr. Eric Enyeil.

The Community Conservation Warden Mr. Wilson Kagoro explained, that it is only through joint efforts with communities that positive wildlife conservation results can be achieved.

The Uganda Wildlife Authority is grateful to UWEC for receiving the leopard cub and ensuring it’s recovery and survival.

“We are proud of the community partnerships built and the desire to protect wildlife as seen by the vigilance of the community members. We shall continue to collaborate in order to effectively conserve for the generations to come,”
Principle Warden Murchison Falls National Park, Dr. Eric Enyeil.
Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) joined the rest of the conservation partners in a market clean up exercise at Nakawa market to promote awareness of hygiene and good health of our cities. The Minister of State for Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities Hon. Godfrey Kiwanda was the chief cleaner. The clean-up under the theme “Creating tourism friendly markets” was spearheaded by Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust as one of the activities leading to the celebrations of World Wildlife Day on March 3, 2019.

Minister Kiwanda argued the Nakawa residents to take the issues of hygiene seriously because hygiene go hand in hand with tourism. “When domestic or foreign tourists travel, they want to feel the pulse of the destination by interacting with people including visitations to the markets which are endowed with organic fruits, when the markets are not clean, it discourages tourists from visiting and promotes a bad image of Uganda”, he said.

Hon. Kiwanda further observed that food is another aspect of tourism that our visitors are interested in and it should clean and safe to eat. “Besides the big five, mountains, birds, water bodies and greenery, the food is one thing our tourists are interested in but only to the point that it’s clean and safe for consumption and the place looking habitable,” he added.

The area Member of Parliament for Nakawa Michael Kabaziguruka who was one of the cleaners urged the vendors to mind about the standard of goods on their stalls if they want to reap money from the tourism industry. “When domestic or foreign tourists travel, they want to feel the pulse of the destination by interacting with people including visitations to the markets which are endowed with organic fruits, when the markets are not clean, it discourages tourists from visiting and promotes a bad image of Uganda”, he said.

Hon. Kabaziguruka challenged market vendors to make their merchandise desirable. “There is no better place than markets to sell mementoes to take back home, serve cuisines like Eshabwe, Lwombo and Emolokony but they must be of standard and sold in an appealing environment and the onus is upon us to make what we sell desirable and market appealing,” noted Mr. Kabaziguruka. “A representative of the vendors, Mr. Simon Baligo pledged to continue the clean up campaign and encourage others to participate. He requested the minister and MP connect them with financing institutions that have friendly lending policies so they can strengthen their businesses through acquisition of loans. Providing loan sources that have friendly lending policies. At the end of the ministerial address, all partners joined hands with Nakawa market vendors to clean the market.
UGANDA WILDLIFE AUTHORITY STAFF CONVICTED FOR POSSESSION OF WILDLIFE PRODUCTS

A staff of Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), Simon Omwony on 31st January 2019 was sentenced to 3 years in prison when he was found in possession of illegal wildlife products. Omwony at the time of his arrest had been working in Ajai wildlife reserve for a period of 8 years. He was apprehended in Luzira and later tried at Buganda road court. On pleading guilty, court sentenced him to 3 years in prison at Luzira maximum prison.

Omwony was found in possession of 2 pieces of ivory, 7 hippo teeth and 7 wart-hogs. This offence is contrary to article 30 and 75(b) of the wildlife act, which forbids dealing, or possession of protected species and trophies. The penalties for such crimes include a fine of 1 million shillings or a maximum sentence of 5 years.

The Deputy Director Legal and Corporate Affairs, Uganda Wildlife Authority, Mr. Chemonges Sabilla expressed shock and disappointed for the wildlife custodian to engage in illegal activities. He warned staff to desist from such temptation and reiterated that in enforcing the law even staff who engage in illegal activities will not be spared “The full force of the law will apply to any one including staff. No efforts will be spared to ensure that wildlife is protected from such bad apples in the system,” he noted. “As much as many people have dedicated their lives to protecting wildlife, so many are still driven by greed and do not focus on protecting wildlife, it is therefore unfortunate when those tasked to protect wildlife are engaged in endangering them,” he noted.

Wildlife crime has become a major issue that conservationists have to deal with each day. Illegal wildlife trade is now listed as one of the global challenges managed by internationally organized syndicates that are fast reducing wildlife from the planet.

In Uganda, poaching for bush meat, firewood collection and timber harvesting are the most widespread crimes committed with a growing number of wildlife trade trafficking cases being reported. These mostly target elephant tusks, pangolins, tortoises and sandalwood. Uganda is also becoming a significant transit country for wildlife products and specimen.

Uganda Wildlife Authority has established specialized wildlife crime intelligence and wildlife crime investigations units to augment existing conventional crime intelligence and investigations services in order to forestall wildlife crimes and also provide solid evidence that helps to secure conviction of offenders in the courts of law. Additionally, UWA established a canine unit that deploys sniffer dogs on our points of entry and exit and these have contributed to curbing illegal wildlife products transiting from or through Uganda.
VIETNAMESE CHARGED WITH ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF WILDLIFE SPECIES

Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) joined the prosecution of two Vietnamese nationals Mr. Dhan Yon Chiew and Mr. Nguyen Son Dong who were arrested by customs officials in possession of Elephant ivory and Pangolin scales. The two suspected are before the Standards, Utilities and Wildlife Court charged with the possession and illegal trafficking wildlife products contrary to the provisions of the Uganda Wildlife Act Cap 200.

On January 31, 2019 Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) customs officials reported to have seized three containers loaded with wildlife contrabands that included ivory and pangolin scales concealed in logs.

Uganda Wildlife Authority is in the process of establishing the source of the ivory and pangolin scales that the suspects were found to be possession. UWA Executive Director noted that the arrest was timely as it provided UWA with the opportunity to tell the world that Uganda would not tolerate illegal wildlife and wildlife product trafficking. UWA will undertake DNA analysis to establish the source of the ivory with a view of working with the relevant authorities to address poaching.

“We have been internationally labelled a conduit for illegal trafficking of wildlife and wildlife products, ruining our reputation on the world stage. We shall use this case to show our resolve to stamp out this illegal trade. While URA handles the case in regard to possession of prohibited products, we will handle it from a different angle”, says Mr. Mwandha. He noted that given the increasing number of wildlife and the fact that Uganda Wildlife Authority can account for elephants in Uganda, it is most probable the contraband came from poaching of wildlife in neighbouring countries.

Uganda Wildlife Authority commended Uganda Revenue Authority and all other agencies that were involved in the operation that led to the arrest of the suspects and seizure of the wildlife species for their vigilance and commitment to fighting illegal wildlife trade which is further endangering Uganda’s wildlife resources. The institution pledged to continue to work with its sister agencies to ensure all those involved in the illegal trade to be brought to book and noted that with cooperation from all relevant agencies, illegal wildlife trade will be stamped out of Uganda.
PARLIAMENT ENACTS NEW WILDLIFE BILL

On the 19th of February 2019, the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda passed the Uganda Wildlife Bill, 2017 and once assented to by the President of Uganda, it will become law. The new Act will replace the Uganda Wildlife Act Cap 200. The new law aims at strengthening the legal framework for wildlife conservation and management in Uganda by strengthening the old one which was considered not stringent enough to match with the latest dynamics of wildlife crime. The old law had non-deterrent penalties that are responsible for the escalating levels of poaching and wildlife trafficking and does not provide for compensation for loss of life and property arising from wildlife escaping from protected areas.

The new law will see poachers jailed for life if found guilty. It is envisaged that the law will assist to curb poaching and illegal wildlife trafficking in Uganda. The new law makes animals like Uganda Kob, Leopard, Squirrel, Impala and Cheetah protected species among others. The new law now provides for a Wildlife Compensation Scheme which shall be used for financing compensation claims for human death or injuries or damage to property caused by a wild animal outside a protected area. Compensation applies only to damage caused by elephants, lions, leopards, crocodiles, buffaloes, hyenas, hippopotamus, gorillas and chimpanzees. This measure is expected to reduce on the killings of stray animals and conflicts between UWA and communities surrounding protected areas.

The new law provides for conservation and sustainable management of wildlife, strengthening wildlife conservation and management. continued the existence of the Uganda Wildlife Authority and streamlines roles and responsibilities for institutions involved in wildlife conservation and management, continue the existence of the Wildlife Fund and other related matters. The policy behind this Bill is to strengthen the legal framework for wildlife conservation and management in Uganda.

At the moment as conservationists we are waiting for the President to assent to the Bill, have it gazetted and then we can put it into practice.

The current Uganda Wildlife Act. The law has been emded and now awaits being accented to by the President.
QUEEN ELIZABETH CA TO HOST THE 3RD EDITION OF UWA INTER CONSERVATION AREA GAMES

Queen Elizabeth Conservation Area will host the 3rd edition of the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) Inter-Conservation Area games due to take place between 12th to 19th June 2019. Preparations are already in high gear and were set in motion with the host CA facilities by sports coordinators of the different conservation areas to see their readiness.

Participants will compete in the disciplines of football, netball, darts, athletics, range shooting and volleyball which is has been introduced in this edition. "We expect this year’s edition to be more exciting compared to other editions because players have done a lot of training,” acknowledged Chemonges Sabilla, Deputy Director Legal and Corporate Affairs.

Last year’s edition was hosted by Kidepo Conservation Area where Murchison Falls emerged overall winner having scooped gold in football, range and darts with a bronze in athletics.

Sports has steadily grown into one of UWA's corporate activities with the organization participating in a number of competitions. This year alone, UWA athletes participated in the annual National Cross Country games organised by Uganda Athletics Federation which took place on 15th – 19th February 2019 at Tororo Golf Course. One of UWA’s runners Masagala Ronald won the 2Km mixed race as Rashid Etiau came as second runners up. In the 6km race Chelengati and Chesang Annet emerged as winner and first runners up respectively. Kiplimo Jacob was the winner for the 10km race which was the longest of all.

Six UWA athletes were selected for the World Cross Country games in Denmark under races of 2km mixed (both men and women), 6km (women under 20), 8km (men under 20), 8km (senior women) and 10 km for senior men.

In Darts, Uganda Wildlife Authority Darts Club participated in the National league and emerged third out of twelve teams. In the Uganda International game, Baguma Eddy received a gold trophy for winning the men’s single as the champion for the 2018 Dart season. Other dart games played include the Conservation Cup, Super Cup and National Playoffs.

"We expect this year's edition to be more exciting compared to other editions because players have done a lot of training.”
Deputy Director Legal and Corporate Affairs, Chemonges Sabilla.

Sarah and Chesang Annet emerged as winner and first runners up respectively.
WILDLIFE MARATHON UNITES CONSERVATIONISTS

The Uganda Wildlife Marathon yet again united conservation loving Ugandans and brought together partners, friends and conservation enthusiasts to raise awareness of wildlife needs in order to safeguard them. The marathon that took place on February 24, 2019 in Kampala, highlighted the large diversity of wildlife in Uganda and encouraged physical fitness as a healthy way for the runners to appreciate and support conservation.

The wildlife marathon was initiated as part of the numerous efforts to convey messages on wildlife conservation and highlight issues that affect their plight to the masses. Now in its 4th year running, the event was one of the activities in the build up to the World Wildlife Day celebrations. The cause for the marathon is to solicit funds to help the families of fallen rangers who passed on while protecting wildlife.

The marathon is arranged under the auspices of Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities and forms one of the core activities to celebrate the annual wildlife day celebrations. The theme for this year’s celebrations was “Harmonious living between wildlife and people.” The participants registered and competed under three broad categories of 5 km, 10 km and 21 km races.

The marathon attracted thousands of participants that included children, students, corporate institutions, and the Chinese community in Uganda. This year’s edition was a big improvement from previous editions with more numbers turning up to rally for the conservation awareness and support.

As early as 6:30am, numerous runners assembled at the museum grounds ready to participate. They had braved the biting cold morning that was earlier characterized by light drizzle. The, State Minister of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities Hon. Godfrey Kiwanda, flagged off the runners with a recommendation to use sports to promote conservation. He affirmed that the Ministry would continue to use sports to create awareness on the need to conserve wildlife. “I call upon the masses to join in the cause of conservation such that wildlife can be kept for the generations to come. Please this issue is very critical because it touches our children’s children to come. Protect our heritage please,” he re-echoed to the participants.

Uganda Wildlife Authority’s Executive Director, Mr. Sam Mwandha thanked partners for the relentless support and participation to ensure the run is a success since its inauguration. He thanked the public for the support given to conservation despite the challenging times and acknowledged that it’s only through support and partnership that the country’s wildlife resources will be kept intact. “Let’s continue to promote awareness of the plight of wildlife through harmonious living with wildlife.”

The routes to the finishing line were dotted with cheerful dancing and singing groups lead by the Fontes dance group who escorted the runners of the various distances to give them morale and encouragement to the finishing line.

The big winner of the day was Sikoria Martin UWA’s elite runner in the 21 km race who stretched to the finish line. He was followed by Yerikana Philip and Kiplangat Silas who came in 2nd and 3rd respectively. The Women celebrated Chepkwemboi Dorcus who won the race followed by Chemutai Doreen and Cheptegei Rebecca in 2nd and 3rd place respectively.

UWA athletes dominated most of the awards and maintained their top position as the defending champions. Ali Chebres, won the 10 kilometer race followed by Solimo David and Musagala Ronald in the 2nd position and in the 3rd respectively while Chesang Annet won the female category by Chiro Night and Dorcus Ajok in 2nd and 3rd positions respectively.

The 5 km men category was won by Mayanja Abu as Eyawu Rashid scooped 2nd position while Niyonzima Oscar was in 3rd place. The winner for the female category was Niyomukunzi Francine who was followed by Cherop Rispa and Amuron Agnes in 2nd and 3rd places respectively.

“Let’s continue to promote awareness of the plight of wildlife through harmonious living with wildlife.”

Executive Director, Mr. Sam Mwandha
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