Uganda marked World Wildlife Day on 3rd March, 2021 in hybrid celebration largely virtual and broadcast live on key televisions and online channels blended with a few selected guests invited to Sheraton Kampala in strict observance of the COVID-19 guidelines. This year’s celebrations held under the theme “Forests and Livelihoods: Sustaining People and Planet,” were presided over by Hon Rtd Col. Tom Butime, the Minister for Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities. Other guests included State Minister for Tourism Hon. Kiwanda Suubi, UNDP resident representative Ms. Elsie Attafuah, Representatives from European Union, Permanent Secretary MTWA Doreen Katusiime, Executive Director Sam Mwandha UWA together with heads of agencies under MTWA.

In his remarks to mark the day, Col. Butime Tom explained that government was committed and supports forest restoration and preservation. Col. Butime noted that communities have extensively benefited from existence of forests many times directly earning from it. He said for example communities with forested parks like Bwindi and Kibale get 20% of the revenue from forest parks that goes to contribute to their welfare as result of their coexistence. He explained that forest cover harbors a lot of wildlife which if replaced will be a big inconvenience to the communities that destroy their habitat. “If you destroy a forest and plant sugar cane where will those animals previously in the forest go. I can assure you that we shall push on and revive this industry,” he said.

The state Minister for Tourism Godfrey Kiwanda Suubi tasked the National Forest Authority (NFA) to sensitize the population on the importance of growing indigenous trees. Uganda’s population is currently over 40 million but statistics indicate that by 2031 we shall have hit 75 million. This trend is worrying given the statistics showing how depleted the country’s forest cover has depreciated from 24% in 1990 to 9% currently. The discussion regarding how worrying the situation is and what needs to be dominated this year’s World Wildlife Day celebrations with a key note speaker Dr. Robert Bitariho with ED UWA Sam Mwandha, ED NFA Tom Okello and WWF ED David Duli discussing his presentation.

The EU representative emphasized the importance of conservation “The value of protecting forests like Bugoma is far higher than the investments. The degradation of forests hurts human environment and nature in forests. We will continue our dialogue at all centers to conserve the forests. The EU is committed to step up support to restore recovery of the depleted forest cover,” said the German Envoy.

The UNDP Resident Representative Ms. Elsie Attafuah said; “The World Wildlife Day affords us the opportunity to celebrate the fantastic diversity of life on earth but also reminds us of our noble duty to conserve and sustainably use forests and wildlife in line with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).” She listed the goals as 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero hunger) 12 (Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns), 13 (Climate Action) and 15 (Life on Land). Attafuah said the focus is not simply about forests providing habitats for wildlife, but it is about development that harnesses the full potential of economies that are nature based. “It is about food security, energy security, water security and human security, among others,” she said. She said that forests contribute immensely to economic growth, employment, wealth creation, export revenues which are a livelihood source for many communities.
The President Uganda Tourism Association Pearl Hoareau Kizito said the reduction of the forest cover from 24 percent to now 9% due to human activities such as agriculture and settlement is worrying. She said the tourism sector has been having a campaign to protect Bugoma forest that was given away to an investor (Hoima Sugar) to grow sugar cane. “Such acts must not be allowed under our watch, our children’s watch, and the children of our children’s watch,” she said.

CONSERVATIONIST RECOGNIZED

At the event, conservationist of the environment and biodiversity were honored for their contribution towards protection of fauna and flora. Those who received awards included: African Wildlife Foundation - for supporting Canine Units, Achilles Byaruhanga won the individual award for his conservation efforts while Capt. Joseph Charles Roy was recognized for shipping in the Rhino Species and donating the land where the Rhino Sanctuary is located.

Wildlife Conservation Media Award went to Vision Group Journalist Gerald Tenywa, while Uganda Lodges and Great Lakes Safaris Chief Executive Amos Wekesa scooped the Sustainable Eco Tourism Award. Her Worship Justice Gladys Kamasanyu won an award for her role in countering poaching. The Head of the Wildlife Court in Africa has helped increase rate of conviction due to poaching by over 80%.

This year’s Key note speaker was Prof. Robert Bitariho who gave a snapshot of the depleted forest cover in Uganda. He said unless these issues are handled immediately, the situation will get worse by 2031 when the population shoots up to 75 million. Tom Okello the Executive Director National Forestry Authority acknowledged that there is a lot of illegal timber falling in gazetted forest areas. He however said the depletion of the forest cover was registered in privately owned forest areas. The Executive Director Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) Sam Mwandha noted that they have had an increase in forest cover in government protected areas but had massive degradation in private cover. He observed that “without forests our survival is in jeopardy.”
Katonga Wildlife Reserve in Kibale Conservation Area in February, 2021 distributed has 08 bee hives as part of its outreach program with frontline communities that surround the park. Each community was given 08 bee hives. The beehives were handed over to communities of Bigoli parish in Kamwenge district by Warden In Charge Katonga wildlife reserve Matanda and sub county chief Biguli Komaho Simeon.

Komaho thanked the management of Katonga Wildlife Reserve for the initiative and urged the communities to continue with the support towards conservation. The beehives are intended to be used by beneficiary communities as apiaries to not only boost their livelihoods and improve household incomes but also serve as a problem animal management tactic for big animals. It is anticipated that this will further reduce illegal activities within the park once people’s incomes are improved through provision of alternative livelihoods.

Apiaries have over time proved to offer more tangible benefits with most communities adjacent to the protected areas appreciative of them. Apart from money they generate as a result of harvesting honey, they also act as a deterrent to elephants averting a serious Human Wildlife Conflict issue. It is therefore hoped that with more beehives distributed, UWA will get in touch even more with its host communities who in turn will appreciate the value of wildlife conservation. This will improve on the relationship between the park and frontline villages.

The beehive initiative benefits many groups of people as opposed to individuals. It is also easy to monitor and determine misuse by a given community member. Previously, Uganda Wildlife Authority has supported numerous alternative projects in communities that include goat rearing and piggery but the projects had been misused by beneficiary families.

IVORY DEALER SENTENCED TO 10 YEARS IN PRISON

Awili David, a 47-year-old resident of Angwee cell, Abim town council, Abim district was sentenced to 20 years in prison or a fine of 12 million for being found in possession of 41.38 Kgs of ivory. He was sentenced on March 10, 2020 by Chief Magistrate Ayo Mariam Okello of the Utilities, Standard and Wildlife Court at Buganda road.

The UWA prosecution team lead by Akello Gladys told court that Awili had been a known suspected ivory dealer who plied his trade around Lira town for some time before his arrest. Under the new wildlife law 2019, prosecution requested for a deterrent custodial sentence that would enable the accused to reform and also send a strong message to any intending ivory traffickers to desist from the vice lest the strong arm of the law catches up with them.

Reacting to the sentence, the UWA ED Sam Mwandha noted that the implication of being on the wrong side of the law are dire because the Wildlife Act 2019 puts in place stringent penalties for any illegal trader of wildlife products. “The Wildlife Act is now biting and its prosecution success rate has been perfect from September 2019 when it came into force” he said. He argued Ugandans to join hands with UWA and protect Uganda’s wildlife instead of decimating it. Awili David was arrested by our team of the Special Wildlife Crime Unit on 20th February, 2021 in Lira City in possession of four pieces of raw ivory without any valid user right.

According to the IUCN red list of threatened species, the elephant is classified as a vulnerable specie because of high levels of poaching attributed to illegal trade in ivory and its products. Currently, the larger populations of elephants in Uganda are found in Queen Elizabeth with other herds in protected areas like Murchison Falls and Kidepo Valley. The recovery of elephant numbers from only about 2000 in the 1980s to the current 8342 is largely attributed to the successful protection efforts implemented by Uganda Wildlife Authority, improved legislation and conservation policies.
Uganda lost Nandi, one of the female rhinos at Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary who breathed her last February 28, 2021 after battling an unknown illness. UWA veterinarians had been managing her health condition that included administering antibiotics, de-wormers, and picking of samples for further investigations. Nandi’s health started deteriorating with loss of body weight and reduced activity. At the time of her death, Nandi was expecting her seventh calf.

Before her death, veterinary doctors took samples from her on 27th January for further examination at Lancet laboratories and the National Animal Disease Diagnostic and Epidemiology Centre. Results indicated that the rhino was struggling with low sodium and chloride, low creatinine but normal urea, low bilirubin, elevated Aspartate Amino Transferase (AST) and total protein with very low albumin. The calcium and phosphorus values were within normal range.

Additional haematology tests that were done on the advice from rhino experts indicated no presence of trypanosomiasis, babesiosis, anaplasmosis or theileria parva as earlier suspected by UWA veterinary doctors and other rhino experts. A post-mortem was undertaken on March 01, 2021 by a team of pathologists from Makerere University and Wildlife Veterinarian from UWA.

Results show a generalized proliferation and enlargement of all the lymph nodes indicating lymphoproliferative disorder, which may be neoplasm or granulomatous disease. Other significant lesions in advanced stage were observed in the lungs, kidneys and along the gastrointestinal tract (GIT).

Nandi, the 21-year old female rhino was born on 24th July 1999. She was brought together with Hassani (a male rhino) to Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary from the Disney Animal Kingdom, Florida, USA in September 2006. By the time of her death, Nandi had successfully calved seven times with the latest being on 9th January 2021. She was laid to rest on March 1, 2021 at Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary.

Executive Director UWA Sam Mwandha appreciated Rhino Fund Uganda and all the stakeholders who, in one way or the other, contributed ideas in a bid to save Nandi. “We hope that we shall continue working together for the better of the remaining Rhino population in Uganda and beyond,” he said.

Nandi was donated by Disney’s Animal Kingdom in Florida, USA in 2006 at the age of 7 years together with Hassani, a male rhino that was aged 5 years then. This pair was part of the first six white rhinos that were re-introduced in Uganda. The two together with four other rhinos earlier introduced from Solio Ranch in Kenya started a breeding nucleus that had evolved to 35 rhinos at Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary located 170 km North of Kampala. The death of Nandi and her daughter Achiru left the total number of rhinos at the sanctuary to 33 individuals.
Uganda Wildlife Authority Executive Director and Chairman National Wildlife Crime Coordination Taskforce (NWCCTF) Sam Mwandha launched NWCCTF’s Secure Information Sharing Platform with help from Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS).

Mwandha thanked the Heads of Institutions for embracing the initiative of coming together as security and law enforcement institutions to fight wildlife crime. He revealed that the Taskforce was in the process of finalizing the capacity needs assessment survey with the view of appreciating the capacities of the member institutions to enable design of targeted interventions to enhance coordination in combating wildlife crime. “We have realized that one of the key challenges of the NWCCTF has been timely sharing information on wildlife crime amongst the member institutions which we needed to urgently resolve”

Maj. General Leopald Kyanda UPDF’s Chief of Staff commended the initiative and noted that it comes at the time it is most needed. “Wildlife crime is a big threat to many facets of security and therefore this implementation requires team work. This is important that we now have an inter-agency collaboration which is critical for addressing the threat posed by illegal traders in to wildlife products,” he noted. He further noted that UPDF was committed to supporting UWA through training and skilling staff.

The platform is meant to enhance information sharing between collaborating institutions and agencies as well as between officers undertaking similar or related assignments. This is hoped to improve the speed at which information is moved from one entity to the other as well as enhance its security.

NWCCTF was formed in 2018 and is composed of various agencies that include Ministry of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities, Uganda People’s Defense Force, Uganda Police Force, Uganda Revenue Authority, Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control, Civil Aviation Authority, Financial Intelligence Authority, Office of Director of Public Prosecution, Internal Social Organization, External Security Organization, National Forestry Authority & National Environmental Management Authority. This initiative is also consistent with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), where its members established the Horn of Africa Wildlife Law Enforcement Network (HAWEN) in November 2017.

The mandate of the taskforce is to promote law enforcement-institutional collaboration and ensure effective cross border control of illegal wildlife trade through sharing information, intelligence, facilities and equipment; undertaking joint operations and prosecutions; and raising awareness against wildlife crime.

Wildlife Trafficking is one of the leading transnational crimes in the world. It is categorized by United Nations among the serious crimes alongside drugs, human & arms trafficking. Tackling the crime requires combined capacities of law enforcement agencies to outsmart the organized and increasingly sophisticated criminal gangs operating various rackets cross the globe.
28 YOUTHS DENOUNCE POACHING IN PURONGO

Efforts by Uganda Wildlife Authority’s (UWA) in partnership with its stakeholders to reduce poaching has yet again paid off as 28 youths from Purongo, at Paara primary in Nwoya district denounced poaching. The youths handed in their wheel traps, spears, arrows and pangas on 25th February, 2021 with a pledge to desist from any illegal wildlife activities and find alternative means of survival. The youths surrendered the hunting tools during a meeting convened by UWA’s community conservation warden Kagolo Wilson and Chairman LC 1 Coyo village Odoki Wilson.

The fight against illegal activities in the parks has been ongoing and a big effort is sustained through massive awareness on the laws and benefits of wildlife in Uganda. Integrated conservation and development projects are created from revenue gained from tourism shared with communities, which has had a positive effect on conservation appreciation in communities.

The reformed youths pledged to mobilize other youths to engage in alternative means of survival and promised to mobilize more poachers in Koch Lii and Got Apwoyo to in their tools of trade and end all forms of illegal activities in the park.

Odoki challenged the reformed poachers to engage in other income generating activities like apiary, piggery and animal rearing for the betterment of their families. “We cannot talk about promotion of the tourism sector when poaching is still rampant among the communities living around the national parks. Whoever reforms from the activity and hands over the equipment they have always used will be welcome, reintegrated into the community and get support to live a normal life,” he said.
SIX ARRESTED OVER THE DEATH OF LIONS IN QUEEN ELIZABETH NATIONAL PARK

Six people were arrested in connection with the death of six lions in Queen Elizabeth National Park March, 2021. The arrested include Ampurira Brian 26 years, Tumuhire Vincent 49 years, Aliyo Robert 40 years, Milango David 68 years, Turyakira Stanley, aged 50 years and Byabashaija Vanansio aged 40 years. These were arrested in a joint operation mounted by UWA, UPDF and Police in Kyenyabutongo village, Rusoroza Parish, Kihhi Sub County, Kanungu District.

The suspects took the security team to a location where 3 heads of lions were found hidden in a tree and the fourth one was buried with 15 legs under the same tree. The suspects said they dropped one leg in the park.

Three bottles containing a chemical commonly known as Furadan and a two-litre jerrycan of lion fat oil were recovered in a banana plantation. Two spears, one panga and one hunting net were found hidden in a garden at the home of Tumuhire Vincent.

The carcasses of the lions were discovered at Ishasha sector on the evening of Friday, March 19, 2021. Nine dead vultures; one White-headed vulture and eight White-backed vultures which are listed as critically endangered species were also found in the same place. Upon their discovery, we launched investigations into the matter.

The Executive Director was upbeat that the people responsible for the heinous act of killing of the treasured lions will be soon brought to book. “Such acts of indiscriminate killing of wildlife should be condemned and whoever is responsible will be held accountable for this very irresponsible action. I want to thank the joint efforts of the security partners involved for moving swiftly and decisively to comb every available clue that culminated into these arrests.

We applaud the security agencies that joined the operation to hunt the people behind the death of our lions and the leadership of Kanungu district for the support extended to the security teams,” he noted.

Following intelligence tip off from credible sources about the people suspected to be behind the killing of the lions, a joint operation by UPDF, Police and UWA was conducted leading to the arrest of the six suspects. The suspects will be arraigned in the courts of law.

We assure the public that we shall continue to strengthen the protection of lions and other wildlife in Uganda and will pursue this case until justice for the dead lions is served. Our national parks remain safe and attractive to visitors and we still have lions in Queen Elizabeth and other parks.

Ishasha is famous for its Tree Climbing Lions
TOURISM PROMOTION EXTENDED TO JUNE 2021

As Uganda continues to manage the impacts of COVID19 and welcome visitors to the various destinations around the country, Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) extended the tourism promotion campaign of 50% discounts to access its national park to June 30, 2021. This offer contained in the Executive Director’s communication to all stakeholders comes to encourage local tourist to go and enjoy the parks as the country recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The promotion started on December 1, 2020 with the aim of rewarding visitors to the parks as especially after staying home for a long time during the lock down. “Our visitors are at the heart of our conservation efforts and as we enter into this festive season, we are glad to be able to reward them for their continued support throughout the years and more especially through this period of the COVID-19 pandemic,” said the Executive director Sam Mwandha in the communication.

The following discounts have been offered and are still applicable: 50% discount on the park entrance fee for Lake Mburo NP, Queen Elizabeth NP, Kidepo Valley NP, Murchison Falls NP, Semuliki NP, Toro Semuliki Wildlife Reserve, Katonga Wildlife Reserve, Kabwoya Wildlife Reserve and Pian Upe Wildlife Reserve. 50% discount on birding fees.

Reduction on Gorilla and chimpanzee tracking fees for all visitor categories are as follows: East African Community citizen gorilla tracking permits reduced from UGX250,000 to UGX150,000; Foreign Resident gorilla tracking permits reduced from USD600 to USD 300; Foreign Non Resident gorilla tracking permits reduced from USD700 to USD 400; East African Community resident chimpanzee tracking permits reduced from UGX150,000 to UGX100,000; Foreign Resident chimpanzee tracking permits reduced from USD150 to USD100; Foreign Non-Resident chimpanzee tracking permits reduced from USD200 to USD150.

The reduction on gorilla and chimp fees will only apply to new purchases between 1st December 2020 and 30th June 2021 and will not apply to reschedules of already deposited on permits or purchases using credit letters.

No reschedules are allowed for the promotional permits beyond the promotional period, therefore all the promotional permits have to be used within the promotional period. UWA further reminds its visitors that we shall continue to adhere to the COVID-19 guidelines throughout this period, which can be downloaded from the UWA website.
NEW WILDLIFE CONSERVATION POLICY DISSEMINATED

Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) on 31st March 2021, conducted a national dissemination workshop of the wildlife conservation policy at Protea Hotel in Kampala. The dissemination workshop was attended by members of the UWA Board of Trustee, UWA Management and stakeholders from districts that surround national parks across Uganda, concessionaires and representatives of communities. While closing the workshop, the UWA Board of Trustee chairman Dr. Panta Kasoma appreciated the contributions of partners like USAID/ Uganda Biodiversity for financial assistance and support in formation of the policy. He said wildlife conservation has immense contribution to human survival because of nature ecosystems it offers to the universe. “The ecosystem processes moderate natural phenomena include pollination by the bees to plants and trees that provide a clean purified environment that offers comfortable human existence,” he said. He added that the action of therefore spraying to kill bees however small it may look, has adverse effects on so many things that impact on health living of human beings. He argued stakeholders to collaborate in changing people’s attitudes towards conservation and support UWA’s interventions. He called for more action and less talk in order to create change.

Dr. Panta thanked stakeholders for the vibrant participation in the due course of the consultation cycle and giving their candid views manifested in the policy. He retaliated UWA’s commitment to implementing the policy for the well-being of conservation and support to the host communities of the national parks. He noted that it was only human for people to need more benefits but added that that they should not negate their responsibility to conserve the environment.

Earlier on, the UWA ED Sam Mwandha noted that the new community conservation policy comes in to strengthen the community conservation function and deal with challenges associated with wildlife, habitat management and community relations. He noted that the policy intends to guide UWA in the implementation of Community Conservation programs, ensure active and effective engagement of local communities and recognise the contribution of local communities in wildlife conservation. “This will enhance equitable sharing of wildlife benefits with local communities, local governments and landowners. This will promote sustainable wildlife-based enterprises, implement mechanisms for addressing human-wildlife conflicts and strengthen collaboration with local governments, private sector and other stakeholders among other roles,” he said.

Mwandha noted that in the recent past, UWA has registered a significant increase in incidences of human-wildlife conflicts leading to loss of crops, property damage, injuries and human death. Another critical challenge is the management of wildlife outside protected areas (on private land) amidst competitive land use practices. He therefore emphasized the need for effective engagement of local communities and others stakeholders in combating wildlife crime, including encroachment on protected areas and vital wildlife habitats.

The Director Conservation Makombo John who facilitated the discussion and feedback session revealed that the key hallmark of the policy was to realize community appreciation and long-term support for conservation through enhanced institutionalized implementation of Community Conservation programs, strategies and activities. It therefore sought to strengthen, transform and ensure active, coordinated and effective implementation of community conservation programmes.

The Policy provides for among others, the development and implementation of management plan for wildlife outside protected area, human-wildlife conflict management strategy, implementation of livelihood improvement interventions, collaborative management initiatives, benefit sharing programs, wildlife enterprises and conservation education and awareness strategy.

Some of the issues highlighted in the policy presentation by Deputy Director Community Conservation George Owoseigire included aggressive awareness to reverse negative attitudes, community engagement to fight poaching/wildlife crime, support of community livelihood projects, Human Wildlife Conflict strategies, institutional capacity building, monitoring data bases and collaborative engagements with stakeholders.
BUILDING HUTS TO ENHANCE VISITOR EXPERIENCE ON MOUNTAIN MUHAVURA IN MGAHINGA NATIONAL PARK

In a bid to offer a new hiking experience to all age groups, Uganda Wildlife Authority established a mountain camp at 3,850 m asl comprising two mountain huts, a kitchen and a toilet for a night stop over before ascent to the peak of Mountain Muhavura. Mount Muhavura is the highest of the three volcanic mountains in Mgahinga National Park preferred by climbers. Previously, the climbers could only go to the peak but descend the same day because of lack of alternative shelter. The challenge has therefore been a preserve for the young and energetic.

The hike to the top of is very eventful from the base of the mountain at 2,138 m asl, through a regenerating forest zone to 3,100 asl at the start of ericaceous zone dominated by heather which also starts the rocky section of the mountain. At this point of the journey is a resting hut to catch your breath and reenergize for the steep hike to the camp. It takes an average hiker, four hours to reach the new camp from the base.

The key highlight of a typical hiking day is the resting camp. At the new camp, huts are equipped with bunk beds. Each hut can accommodate a maximum of eight climbers. The camp has the capacity to host 16 climbers in one night. This camp sits amidst the Senecios and lobelias which are characteristic afro-alpine vegetation with breathtaking views. While there, one can view volcanoes in DRC and Rwanda and Lake Mutanda in Kisoro. The night is cold typical of a mountain camp. Warm clothing is needed to tame the coldness to get a deserved rest after tiresome hike. The new experience allows for meals to be prepared at the resting hut and the camp making the hike comfortable and enjoyable. Porters and a cook to support hikers in the expedition to summit Muhavura can be got from the community.

The next day, the climbers can now ascend to the summit of the mountain.
famously shared between Uganda and Rwanda. On the summit sits a beautiful crater surrounded by scattered lobelias. Here the sights of the volcanic mountains and crater lakes are clearer before and after sun rise. It is a perfect setting for a photography. The hike is made easy by ladders installed along the hiking trail. It takes you 30 min to ascend to the summit. It takes about three hours to reach the base camp.

Chief Warden Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Area Guma Nelson observes that the camp will provide an opportunity to offer a rich mountaineering experience with exciting interpretation of different vegetation zones, landscapes and wildlife during the hike as a progressing party has no pressure to rush to reach the top and descend to the base the same day. “To enhance the experience, more rest stop points will be established and more ladders installed at some of the steep sections of the trail,” he said.

Mgahinga Gorilla National Park found in Kisoro District in South Western Uganda is the smallest park covering an area of 33.7 sq km. It borders with Virunga National Park in DRC and Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda. It boasts of three Volcanoes – Mount Muhavura towering at 4,127 m asl, Mountain Sabinyo and Mount Gahinga. All the three volcanic mountains offer a hiking challenge sought after by mountain climbers. One day hike to Muhabura costs $80 for Foreign National Resident, $70 for Foreign Resident and UG X 50,000 for East African Community citizens. The 2-day experience will be packaged to include accommodation cost. The package will exclude cost of a porter(s) carrying personal effects, food and wages of a cook.

**TIPS FOR HIKING MUHABURA**

- Prepare your minds well for a hiking activity and focus on reaching the destination.
- Have good hiking shoes to give you comfort during hiking.
- Remember to carry enough drinking water and food to strengthen you during the hike.
- Set yourself a moving pace and maintain it throughout.
- Remember to carry a walking stick.
- Remember to carry personal first aid kit with you.
- Warm clothing is necessary as high-altitude temperatures may affect you.
- If you have a heavy luggage, hire a porter and let him/her go with you.
- Always follow the instructions of your guide and make use of his expertise.

Mountains Muhavura, Gahinga and Sabinyo
CREATING COMMUNITY AWARENESS THROUGH PARTNERSHIP.

A partnership between Uganda Wildlife Authority and Wildlife Conservation Society and gave birth to a sensitisation drive of the Wildlife Act 2019 with enhanced penalties for various wildlife offences in order to curtail activities of wildlife poachers, traffickers and related criminals in March, 2021. The sensitization was aimed at creating awareness about the punitive penalties in the new law and enlisting public support towards fighting wildlife crimes. A team headed by Deputy Director Community Conservation George Owoyesigire and Vanice Mirembe Manager Awareness and Human Wildlife Conflict traversed Queen Elizabeth and Murchison Falls landscape in North and Western Uganda to raise awareness.

The sensitisations also focused at strengthening cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation among security, customs and law enforcement agencies at the national entry and exit points with meetings held with Uganda Revenue Authority (URA), Immigration and Customs and Uganda Police on the border points of Nimule, Mpondwe and Ishasha. Radio talk shows were also conducted at Rupiny and Kitara FM in Gulu and Masindi while in Kasese, Guide FM and Voice of Toro in Fort portal town hosted the team in Western region. The team also distributed and displayed awareness materials in public places and border points.

Deputy Director Community Conservation George Owoyesigire observed that the engagements provided an opportunity for raising awareness about wildlife crimes and penalties. "It provided an opportunity to understand the current situation on the ground. We observed that, cross-border illegal wildlife trade and trafficking at the border points can be effectively managed through a collaboration by UWA, URA, Immigration, Customs and Uganda Police. We believe that, intensified law enforcement and awareness will discourage illegal activities around the targeted landscapes," he noted. He noted that radio talk-shows provided feedback on important interventions required to avert illegal trade, poaching, minimising HWC and improving relations between communities and UWA.

The Supervisor Customs Mpondwe border Abel Gulu thanked UWA for the timely initiative of sensitising the customs, immigration, police and the general public. He noted that the initiative would go a long way in creating awareness of the new law and provide information that will deter crime based on people's knowledge of the harsh penalties.
UWA RECEIVES TWO VEHICLES FOR ANTI-POACHING ACTIVITIES IN QUEEN ELIZABETH NATIONAL PARK

Uganda Wildlife Authority Executive Director Sam Mwandha, on 17th March, 2021 received two new Land Cruisers from UCF with funding secured from EU / CITES MIKES. These specially modified patrol vehicles were secured for frontline of operations in Queen Elizabeth National Park. The function was attended by the EU delegation representative Nadia Cannata, Head Sustainable Development, Jalia Kobusigye, UCF Trustee Michael Keigwin and UWA’s Deputy Director Field Operation Charles Tumwesigye. The vehicles are funded under a 3-year project funded by European Union through UN Environment Program. The Project is implemented by Uganda Conservation Fund and UWA.

The ED- UWA appreciated the funding put forward to ensure conservation sustainability in Queen Elizabeth Conservation Area. “We are truly grateful to UCF, the EU and the CITES MIKES programme for their commitment to protecting Queen Elizabeth National Park, a core part of every Ugandans heritage that we must conserve for future generations. At any one time, UWA is needed in every corner of the park to carry out on-going work and resolve problems, they are large areas and these vehicles will enable us to be far more productive and successful in our operations. That will help everyone – including tourism and our closest partners, the communities.”

On behalf of European Union, Ms. Nadia Cannata noted that the EU recognized the incredible efforts and professionalism UWA has shown, especially through such difficult times. “We are positive these cars will make a tremendous positive impact in Queen Elizabeth National Park for the benefit of the conservation, the recovery of tourism and the contributions to the regional and national economies,” she said.

Michael Keigwin, Trustee of the Uganda Conservation Foundation was clearly delighted to see the cars ready for the operations. “Everything we do is about helping UWA succeed. UWA is full of brilliant professionals. Our job is simply to enable success. I know these cars will make a considerable impact in park whether supporting anti-poaching, resolving problem animal issues or helping vets respond to injured wildlife. What a fantastic day, thank you UWA, especially those on the frontline, and of course all at CITES MIKES and the EU who made this possible,” he said.