

UGANDA WILDLIFE AUTHORITY



GORILLA AND CHIMPANZEE TRACKING PERMIT RESERVATION GUIDELINES

REVISED - 2020



MOUNTAIN GORILLA AND CHIMPANZEE TRACKING PERMIT RESERVATION GUIDELINES 2020

1. PREAMBLE

Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) was established by the Uganda Wildlife Act Cap 200 with the mandate to protect and conserve wildlife sustainably for the benefit of the people of Uganda. The Wildlife Act authorizes UWA to charge fees for the services it provides and to develop policies and procedures to guide the sustainable utilization of these resources. The Act further authorizes the Board of Trustees to guide the process of sustainable utilization of the resources.

2. UWA MISSION AND CORE VALUES

UWA's Mission is to conserve, economically develop and sustainably manage the wildlife and protected areas of Uganda in partnership with neighbouring communities and other stakeholders for the benefit of the people of Uganda and the global community.

The Core Values are:

- i. Commitment to conservation;
- ii. Team work;
- iii. Customer Care and Quality service;
- iv. Professionalism;
- v. Integrity.

3. OBJECTIVES

The purpose of these guidelines is to assist UWA staff and clients in managing the gorillas and chimpanzee tracking permit reservation process, from booking, payments and refunds, cancellations and reschedules, in a timely and effective manner that serves UWA's clients better and reduces conflicts.



The main objectives of the guidelines are:

- i. To provide clear guidance to clients on the procedures for obtaining permits for gorilla and chimpanzee tracking and habituation experience,
- ii. To provide guidance to the management of emerging issues related to cancellations, refunds and reschedules,
- iii. To improve customer care and services to the clients
- iv. To enable UWA to collect data on the visitors engaging in gorilla and chimpanzee activities during the year.

Ultimately, the guidelines will lead to better customer satisfaction and better reviews and recommendations which will further result into higher visitor numbers for gorilla tracking and to the country's protected areas.

4. PROCEDURE FOR RESERVING AND PURCHASING PERMITS FROM UWA HEADQUARTERS AND OTHER RESERVATION CENTRES

UWA currently operates an automated system to manage the sale of gorilla and chimpanzee tracking and habituation experience permits. The procedure below shall apply for reserving and purchasing tracking and habituation permits for gorillas and chimpanzees:

- i) Reservations for gorilla tracking and habituation permits shall be done from any of the following locations:
 - The Reservations Office at the UWA Headquarters in Kampala.
 - Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (BINP).
 - Mgahinga Gorilla National Park (MGNP).
 - Other Service/ Information Centres, as will be advised from time to time.
- ii) Reservations for chimpanzee tracking and habituation permits shall be done from any of the following locations:
 - The Reservations Office at the UWA Headquarters in Kampala.
 - Kibale National Park (KNP).
 - Queen Elizabeth National Park (QENP) at Kyambura Gorge
 - Other Service/ Information centres, as will be advised from time to time.
- iii) Where a client chooses to purchase the permits at the Park, he or she shall, upon receipt of confirmation of availability of permits, purchase permits at least seven



- (7) days before the date of the tracking. Such purchase will be with full payment of the value of that permit. Part payment will not be accepted.
- iv) UWA shall reserve and sell 80% of the daily permits through Uganda Registered Tour Operators, with valid operating licences. Any unreserved permits will be opened up to the public and walk-in clients 4 months to tracking. This provision is subject to change upon review from time to time.
 - v) The remaining 20% of the permits from (IV) above will be sold to walk in clients. Walk in clients shall be required to present their valid identification documents.
 - vi) A permit may be reserved in advance for a period not exceeding two (2) years provided:
 - a) The client has made payment deposit of at least 30% of the value of the permit(s) at the time of booking;
 - b) The balance on the booking or reservation shall be made not later than 90 days to the tracking date;
 - c) Where full payment has not been received 90 days to the tracking date, the permit shall be automatically cancelled and the client shall forfeit 30% of the total permit value.
 - vii) Payment(s) shall be done in full for all permits reserved ninety (90) days or less to the tracking date. No part payments shall be accepted for such permits.
 - viii) Uganda Wildlife Authority reserves the right to amend these procedures from time to time.

5. ONLINE BOOKING

Permits may be booked or reserved through the internet (online). The following terms shall apply:

- i) Tour operators registered with the Uganda Tourism Board (UTB) shall be eligible to book or reserve permits online.
- ii) All payments for permits booked online shall be made within seven (7) calendar days from the date of booking.



- iii) Payments for the permits shall be made at the Reservations Office at UWA Headquarters or any other place as UWA may determine. However, no cheques, except bank drafts, shall be accepted.
- iv) Where the Tour Operator fails to make payment for the permit within the time stated in (ii) above, such booking or reservation shall be automatically cancelled.

6. COLLECTION OF PERMITS

- i) Tour operators shall submit details of their clients for the permits booked in advance to the UWA Reservation Office to ensure that permits for these clients are printed at least seven (7) days before the tracking date.
- ii) All permits booked and paid for in advance shall be collected from the Reservations Office at least 3 days before tracking.

7. LOCATION OF GORILLA FAMILIES AND CHIMPANZEE COMMUNITIES

Gorillas

- i) Mountain gorillas in Uganda are currently found in BINP and MGNP. Although the different gorilla families are given names for ease of identification for conservation purposes, the booking of permits shall be made based on the locations of the family, which currently are at Buhoma, Rushaga, Ruhija and Nkuringo in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park and at Nyakagezi in Mgahinga Gorilla National Park.
- ii) Other locations may be established taking into consideration the movement of the gorillas within their habitat.
- iii) Within the locations, visitors shall be allocated to track specific gorilla family groups on the day of tracking taking into consideration the circumstances on the ground.

Chimpanzees

1. Chimpanzee Walk or Chimpanzee tracking provides an opportunity to find and observe chimpanzees in their natural habitat. Visitors can book and carry out this



activity at Kanyanchu in Kibale National Park and Kyambura Wildlife Reserve in Queen Elizabeth National Park.

2. Chimpanzee Habituation Experience, allows visitors to accompany researchers and habituators into the forests for the purpose of participation in the process of getting them accustomed to humans. Briefing is done at Kanyanchu Visitor Centre.
3. Chimpanzee Habituation Experience starts at 6:00 am while chimpanzee tracking starts at 8:30 am

Other locations may be opened and will be communicated by UWA management from time to time

8. VISITOR CATEGORY

The prices for permits vary based on the residence status of the visitors. Currently the three visitor categories are:

- i) East African Community citizens (**EAC**): Citizens from the East African Community (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and South Sudan).
- ii) Foreign Non Residents (**FNR**): Visitors from outside Uganda and the East African Community.
- iii) Foreign Residents (**FR**): Foreign citizens, resident in the East African Community States with valid work permits or resident visas/permits.

Visitor category shall be verified with the relevant documentation at the point of sale and at check-in prior to departure for tracking.

9. PAYMENT METHODS

The acceptable payment methods are:

- i) Debit/credit card payments
- ii) Bank Transfers to UWA accounts (inclusive of bank charges) - Please contact info@wildlife.go.ug or reservations@wildlife.go.ug for bank account details.
- iii) Bank Drafts (including bank charges)



- iv) Any other payment method as UWA may determine and communicate from time to time.

NOTE: UWA does not have any agents within and outside Uganda. All payments should be made directly to the UWA bank account or through the reservations office and service / information centres as will be advised from time to time.

10. RESCHEDULE OF PERMITS

A reschedule refers to change of dates and locations for tracking as provided for in this guidelines.

- i) Re-schedules for the booked permits for gorilla or chimpanzee tracking and habituation shall only be permitted for only fully paid for permits.
- ii) Where reschedules have been permitted, such reschedules shall only be made once.
- iii) Where a permit has been rescheduled before, no refund shall be permitted against such a permit.
- iv) Where requests for reschedules are received after a change in the cost of the permits, such reschedules shall attract an extra cost up to the prevailing rate of the permit at the time of rescheduling.
- v) Requests for reschedules should be received eight (8) days to the tracking date. Any requests received after this period shall attract a penalty of 25% of the cost of a permit.
- vi) Reschedules shall not be permitted for periods exceeding one year.

11. TRACKING AND VIEWING TIME LIMIT

Tracking time for the gorillas and chimpanzees includes the whole experience starting immediately after the briefing up to the time of return for the debrief. It may take a while to locate and view the primates.

Viewing time refers to the duration the clients stay with the primates after encounter.



- i) Tracking of gorillas and chimpanzees shall be done within the timelines stated hereunder;
 - a) Gorilla Tracking - From 8:00 am to the time when visitors return to base for debriefing.
 - b) Gorilla habituation Experience - From 7.00 am to the time when the visitors return to base for debriefing.
 - c) Chimpanzee tracking - From 8.00am (for morning tracking) and 2.00pm (for afternoon tracking) to the time that the visitors return to base for debriefing.
 - d) Chimpanzee habituation experience - From 6.30 am to the time when the visitors return to base for debriefing.

- ii) The viewing time for gorillas and chimpanzees shall be as follows:
 - a) A maximum of one (1) hour viewing for normal tracking of both gorillas and chimpanzees
 - b) A maximum of four (4) hours for the Chimpanzee habituation experience.
 - c) A maximum of four (4) hours for the gorilla habituation experience
 - d) Any other duration that UWA may from time to time authorise.

The viewing time shall commence from the time the clients reach the viewing point identified by the guiding officer.

12. MINIMUM AGE LIMIT

- i) The minimum age limit for tracking and viewing gorillas in both BINP and MGNP is 15 years.
- ii) The minimum age limit for tracking and viewing chimpanzees in QENP at Kyambura Gorge and Kibale National Park is 12 years.

13. CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS

- i) Except as provided hereunder, UWA shall not make any refunds of money paid for gorilla and chimpanzee tracking or habituation experiences.
- ii) The Executive Director may, upon receiving a written request, authorise cancellation of a fully paid permit on the following terms:



Failure to view Gorillas/Chimpanzees

- a) Where the client, upon tracking for a whole day, fails to see a gorilla(s) or chimpanzee(s), the Executive Director may authorise rescheduling of the permit to the following day subject to availability of slots.
- b) Where there are no available slots for rescheduling the permit, the Executive Director shall authorise cancellation of the permit and a refund of 50% of the permit value upon certification/confirmation of the inability to access gorillas/chimpanzees by the respective Chief Warden/ Warden in Charge

Illness and accidents

- a) A visitor who may develop or shows signs of illness before tracking shall not be allowed to visit the gorillas or chimpanzees. Such a client shall be referred to the nearest health facility to ascertain the extent of his illness and his inability to track.
- b) The illness shall be confirmed by a medical report. The cost of diagnosis shall be borne by the client.
- c) The Executive Director shall authorise cancellation of the permit and processing of a refund of 50% of the permit value to a visitor declared unfit to track gorillas or chimpanzees due to illness.
- d) This cancellation policy shall only apply to visitors already in the Park to track gorillas and chimpanzees but develop or show signs of illness before tracking.
- e) The Executive Director shall authorise cancellation of a permit and processing of a refund of 50% of the permit value to client who fails to track gorillas or chimpanzees due to an accident sustained in the Park before tracking.



Double or Over Payments

- i) The Executive Director shall upon receipt of a written request, authorise refund of 100% to a client that presents evidence of a double payment or any payment over and above the prevailing permit value payment.
- ii) The Executive Director may also authorise utilisation of any funds confirmed as a double payment or over payment to another tourism activity.

General cancellations

- i) The Executive Director may authorise cancellation of a permit for other reasons, other than those specified above on the following conditions;
 - a) Any request for cancellation within eight (8) days to the tracking date, shall attract no refunds.
 - b) A client that requests for cancellation of a permit between nine (09) to forty-five (45) days to the tracking date shall be entitled to 25% of the permit value.
 - c) A client that requests for cancellation of a permit between forty-six (46) to ninety (90) days to the tracking date shall be entitled to 50% of the permit value.
 - d) A client that requests for cancellation of a permit ninety-one (91) days and more to the tracking date shall be entitled to 75% of the permit value.
- ii) All requests for cancellation of permits shall be made in writing and addressed to the Executive Director, Uganda Wildlife Authority.

While considering any request for cancellation of a permit, the Executive Director shall consider the date of receipt of the request as the date of cancellation for purposes of determining the refund.



14. UPGRADE OF PERMITS

Upgrade of payments from chimpanzee and gorilla tracking to habituation experience shall be permitted. A request for the upgrade shall be made in writing by the visitor (or Tour Operator) and payment of the difference in cost shall be made by the person who made the reservation. This will be subject to availability of the requested permits.

15. TRANSFER OF FUNDS FROM ONE ACTIVITY TO ANOTHER

Funds meant for one activity may be allowed to fund another activity or product outside the scope of the activity that was paid for in instances of cancellations and claims for refunds. Such requests may be considered subject to availability

16. CONTACT DETAILS

For further inquiries, please contact

Head of Reservations
Uganda Wildlife Authority
P. O. Box 3530, Kampala
Plot 7, Kira Road, Kamwokya
Tel +256 414 355 000 /405/409/410
Email: reservations@wildlife.go.ug.
Info@wildlife.go.ug

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Mwandha', is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Sam Mwandha
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

January 02, 2020