

# WHITE EARED KOB IN PIAN UPE WILDLIFE RESERVE, UGANDA

Prepared by

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MAY, 2019

## NOTES

### A) How the species was sighted

The male White-eared Kob (*Kobus kob leucotis*) a rare sighting in 2 decades was again sighted in Pian Upe Wildlife Reserve (PUWR) on 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2019 between 09:09 Am and 09:13 Am in the morning hours as we conducted a ground truthing study of vegetation change analysis. A black and white animal that was not familiar to our faces appeared as we drove along lopolokocho road inside the reserve. I asked my colleagues whether they had seen what i saw but none of them saw what i had seen. I pointed at the animal that was on the left hand side of the car. At first sight they insinuated it to be a kob but the kob we knew for long in PUWR was not having black and white patches. We decided to drive towards it as it kept running away from us. At one point i came out of the car and tried to move towards it so as to get a clear photo in vain. The animal kept running towards the kadam hills. I entered the car again and we drove faster in front of it and succeeded to divert it towards the lopolokocho road. At this time we managed to get some of the photos and it was identified as a White eared Kob (*Kobus kob leucotis*) near morukali hill. We marked some way points with our GPS and geo-referenced the sighting in Arc 1960; 36 N 0680118 and UTM 0182852 (Figure 1) with an elevation of 1170 meters above sea level (asl).

### B) Photos taken

For memory, we took photos (Plate 1) and recorded a short video.



**Plate 1.** Additional pictures for the White eared Kob in PUWR

### C) Facts about Pian Upe Wildlife Reserve

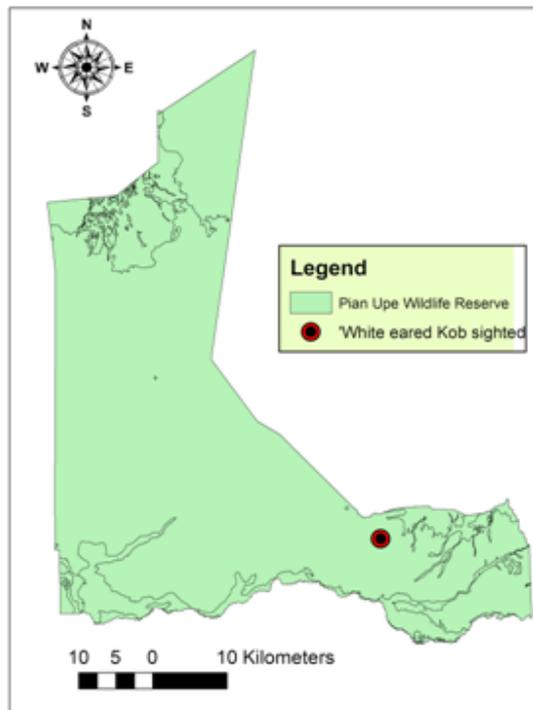
Pian Upe is located in Nakapiripirit District in the north-eastern Uganda. It is the second largest wildlife protected area as well as the largest wildlife reserve in Uganda. It is a home to many ungulate species of a diverse nature. PUWR is part of the Karamoja area which belongs to the Somali-Masai biome with *Acacia* and *Combretum* savanna, steppe and thickets, interspersed with isolated volcanic mountains capped with *Juniperus*-*Podocarpus* forest. The savanna is dominated by *Hyperrhenia* which is the basis for pastoralism as the economic activity of the region and a potential area for wildlife conservation. It can be accessed from the southern part through Mbale, Sironko and Kween Districts using Namalu road. To the north it can be accessed through Moroto and Nabilatuk Districts using Mbale road. Additional information about the status of the reserve and the species therein can be obtained from the survey reports accessed using this link

<https://www.ugandawildlife.org/download/category/14-survey-reports>

#### D) Distribution

A white eared kob was last sighted between May and June 1996 close to Lake Opeta during an aerial survey conducted in PUWR (Lamprey and Michelmore 1996). The recent sighting (Figure 1) was also made during the month of May insinuating that the month of May could be unique on the calendar of PUWR.

The question to ask is where does this species spend most of its time before the month of May? The month of



"May" could be associated with its movement pattern in south karamoja. Monitoring of this subspecies should be intensified in this month in the 2 sites of morukali hill and areas close to Lake Opeta in the southern part. However, with the anthropogenic factors the movement pattern could be interrupted. I suggest that the heavy use of PUWR by live-stock that results in habitat degradation and a reduction in biodiversity be controlled through implementation of the zoning system. In Uganda, information on whether KVNP is a former range for this subspecies cannot be verified easily; aware that Kidepo Valley National Park shares its northern border with South Sudan. The white-eared kob (*K. k. leucotis*) is a dark subspecies from the "Sudd" (a vast swamp in South Sudan) and nearby regions (Figure 2). The subspecies occupies floodplains and seasonally flooded grasslands. Lake Opeta shares a flooded grassland with PUWR; this could be the reason for its preference to the Pian landscape.

**Figure 1.** Location of the White eared Kob in Pian Upe Wildlife Reserve, 2019

Once feared almost extinct because of the [Second Sudanese Civil War](#) (1983–2005), surveys in 2007 and later



confirmed that several hundred thousand white-eared kobs (*Kobus kob leucotis*) survive. They participate in one of the largest mammal migrations on earth, numbering about 1.2 million individuals in total (Wiki 2019). The white-eared kob are found in Boma, Badingilo NPs and Zeraf Game Reserve (South Sudan) as well as the Gambella NP (Ethiopia). These areas are crucial to the survival of the White-eared Kob (IUCN 2016).

**Figure 2.** Location of the sudd in south sudan: Source Wiki

### E) Conclusion

Pian Upe Wildlife Reserve is now a known range for the white eared kob. Therefore, its movement pattern need to be monitored using collars, geo-referenced and documented.

### F) Reference

Lamprey, R.H. & Michelmore, F. (1996). Surveys of Protected Areas Phase 1. Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, Kampala, Uganda.

IUCN SSC Antelope Specialist Group 2016. *Kobus kob* ssp. *leucotis*. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species 2016: e.T11042A50190165. Downloaded on 30 July 2019. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2016-2.RLTS.T11042A50190165.en>.

Wikipedia 2019. [available] <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kob> downloaded 30/July/2019.





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