

Gorilla population in the Virunga Massif Increases



After several campaigns were launched locally & internationally to create awareness about protecting mountain gorillas, the effects are today positive.

The population of the endangered Mountain gorillas in Virunga Massif has increased by 26.3% over the last seven years.

A statement from the wildlife agencies of Uganda, Rwanda and DR Congo shows that the current gorilla population in Virunga is estimated at 480, up from 380 as per 2006 census.

Virunga Massif comprises of Mga-hinga Gorilla National Park in Uganda, Volcanoes National Park in Rwanda and Parc National des Virunga in DR Congo. Gorillas are also found in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park in Uganda.

According to the statement, the annual growth rate of gorilla population is estimated at 3.7% matched to that of human population growth in Uganda.

The census team encountered a total of 480 mountain gorillas in 36 groups and 14 solitary silverback males in the Virunga Massif. Of the 480 gorillas, 352 (73%) were habituated (349 in groups and three solitary males), while 128 were not habituated (117 in groups and 11 solitary males).

The census was conducted by six teams of 72 people from Rwanda, DR Congo and Uganda, who trekked over 1,000km through the range, documenting fresh signs of mountain gorilla groups.

The last census, conducted in 2006,

estimated the gorilla population at 340 in Bwindi impenetrable National Park.

Inside this Issue

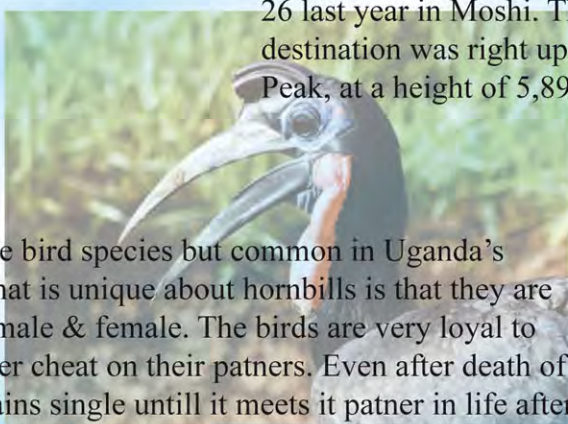
- **Government takes on MV Kalangala**
- **78 Year Old at the Rwenzori Peak, Margherita**
- **Yellow Fever screening mandatory for travelers**
- **Blind Ugandan Woman braves Kilimanjaro**

UWA commissions community projects in Kisoro

Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) along with the International Gorilla Conservation Program (IGCP) and the local communities have commissioned a number of projects in Bwindi and Mgahinga Gorilla National Parks aimed at promoting the conservation of the critically endanger mountain gorillas and gorilla tourism.

Among the projects commissioned are the new Nkuringo Patrol post along with the Visitor Information centre and 3 rain water harvesting tanks in Mgahinga Protected Area.

UWA's acting Executive Director, Dr. Andrew Ggunga Seguya flanked by the Director of Conservation Mr. John Makombo and the IGCP officials commissioned the projects.



Wild Life facts

Hornbills are rare bird species but common in Uganda's National Parks. What is unique about hornbills is that they are always in pairs of male & female. The birds are very loyal to each other and never cheat on their partners. Even after death of one, the other remains single until it meets its partner in life after death!

Hart Beasts are brown wild animals which belong to the antelope family. Funny about them is they are so forgetful, they have such a poor memory to the extent that when they are being chased by a lion, after running for a short distance they stop & wonder why they are running before realising the monster is really close this time!

Blind Ugandan Woman braves Kilimanjaro

Florence Ndagire goes in records as one of the 25,000 people who have braved the biting cold to navigate the steep slopes and burrow through thickets to climb Mount Kilimanjaro last year.

Being born blind was not in the least a hindrance to her joining a team of 19 other people comprising Ugandans, Kenyans, Britons and Tanzanians to raise funds to tell the world about the plight of the disabled. Ndagire works at the Uganda Society for the Disabled (USDC).

“My dream was to reach that eternal snow-cap tip of the highest freestanding mountain on earth.

The adventure, code-named Able Child Africa, began on November 26 last year in Moshi. The final destination was right up to Uhuru Peak, at a height of 5,895 meters.

78 Year Old at the Rwenzori Peak, Margherita

78 year old Beryl Park successfully hiked to the peak of the Rwenzori mountains. She is the first recorded advanced age lady tourist to successfully reach the summit of the Rwenzori Mountains on Stanley – Margherita.

Beryl started the hike on 8th November 2010 at Mulyambuli gate through the Kilembe trail circuit of approximately 38km distance to Stanley peak (Margherita 5109m above sea level).

The excited lady expressed satisfaction on successfully achieving her 30year old dream of appreciating the beauty of Rwenzori Mountains of the moon.

She observed that, even though she has hiked several mountains including Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Rwenzori had remained a dream.

When few could believe a woman of her age could go so high, many more were amazed when the lady, went through the thickets of Bwindi Impenetrable forest and the slippery valleys to track the famous gorillas.

Yellow Fever screening mandatory for travelers

Previously, travelers within the East African region were not required to have yellow fever vaccines for them to cross to any other member country.

However, as a measure to prevent the spread following an outbreak of the viral disease in northern Uganda, vaccination against yellow fever is now compulsory for travelers across the east African region.

According to reports, yellow fever has infected 198 and claimed 50 lives.

Efforts are underway to establish yellow fever vaccination centers at all border posts and major entry points.

Baboons killed

Not less than 30 baboons were killed and many more injured when a vermin control team raided their hideout after residents complaints of destruction of their farms. The animals also became a major threat to women and young children who would be going about their casual chores and going to school respectively.

Uganda Wildlife's Authority's efforts to prevent the deaths were too little too late as the vermin team made a decision and went on to actually implement it.

Government takes on MV Kalangala

The ministry of transport will temporarily manage and operate MV Kalangala until a new company is identified to take over its management.

The move follows the expiry of a three-year contract awarded to Mulwooza and Brothers Company's to run the vessel.

The ship, which plies the Nakiwogo (Entebbe)-Kalangala route, was on Sunday returned from Mwanza, Tanzania, where it had been taken for routine inspection and repair.

It is expected to resume operations after the transport ministry chief mechanical engineer has ascertained its sea-worthiness, a source from the ministry said.

He also revealed that several companies, including Mulwooza and Brothers, have already submitted bids to operate and manage the vessel.

2011 Elections

With less than a month to polls, election fever is on all over the country.

The hotly contested top job in the country has up to eight candidates including incumbent Yoweri Museveni, IPC's Kizza Besigye, DP's Norbert Mao, UPC's Olara

Otunu, Federal Alliance's Betty Kanya Olive, PPP's Bidandi Sali, and independents Abed Bwanika & Lubega.

Uganda goes to the polls in February starting with presidential elections before going for parliamentary and local councilors voting later on. Elections go on up to early March.

FEATURE

Kyaninga Lodge

Located in Fort Portal, Kyaninga is one spectacular & stunning backdrop of the Lake Kyaninga waters and the legendary Mounatins of the moon, Rwenzori.

Set on the rim of a crater lake, Kyaniniga is entirely built out of timber with ultimate comfort & style.

This lodge is dazzled by uniqueness, from a wooden walkway, spacious cottages to a swimming pool lined with pavers cut from volcanic rock & which also features a submerged seat and wooden decks.

While at the lodge, one can go for nature walks, chimpanzee tracking and it is hardly an hour away from the Kibaale National Park for other wildlife encounters.

Up Coming Events & Exhibitions

5th conference & exhibition on the petroleum potential & investment opportunities in East Africa

Under the theme, “harnessing East Africa’s oil & gas potential and utilizing the resources to create lasting value”, the conference will mainly focus on exploring the region’s varied attractions and diverse beauty.

The conference will be held at the Kampala serene hotel from 2nd – 4th February 2011.

The exhibitions will mainly be about the petroleum potential and investment opportunities in east Africa. The East African Petroleum Conference and Exhibition is recognized globally as a premier event international forum for those working in the petroleum sector.

Uganda Tourism Board will play a major role of coordinating events and organizing the hospitality affairs for the conference.

ITB Berlin, Germany

Uganda Tourism Board will lead a delegation of Ugandans to Berlin, Germany for the travel & tourism Exhibition in March 2011.

ITB is a leading travel trade show which will showcase from 9-13th March 2011, in Berlin Germany.

The Ugandan team of exhibitors will focus on marketing & promoting destination Uganda as a viable tourism destination to the travel & tourism fraternity and to most importantly tap into the Germany market.

Western Uganda goes cultural

Igongo cultural centre will be the latest addition to tourists & travelers calendars & schedules while in Uganda.

Within the vicinity of Lake Mburo National Park and along the Masaka – Mbarara highway, the cultural centre is strategically located targeting travelers to western Uganda, Rwanda & the DR Congo.

Igongo, together with environment bodies including Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), National Forestry Authority (NFA) and Nature Uganda, has taken on the initiative of protecting the environment in a bid to promote tourism.

The centre boasts of a community museum, a craft shop, a cultural village, a community hall & leisure gardens and a state of the art restaurant serving both local & exotic cuisines.

Winter affects Tourist Arrivals in Uganda

By the end of last year, countries in the northern pole were hit by winter with unbearable snow.

The winter season not only affected the hit countries but also all other countries. Here in Uganda, tourists & travelers had to council there bookings for holidays in Uganda.

This was attributed to cancellations in flights from major airports in Europe.