

# Cheap slumber at Queen Elizabeth

**GOOD BARGAINS:** Uganda Wildlife Authority has set up cheap accommodation for students at the Queen Elizabeth National game park.

BY ENID NINSIMA  
editorial@ug.nationmedia.com

To boost domestic tourism, Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) has established a modern students' hostel called 'Education Centre' to cater for the increasing numbers of students. The new hostel has three self-contained wings, the West wing that accommodates female students, East for males and North for teachers at affordable price of Shs5,000 per student per night. As one enters Mweya Peninsula that sits over Kazinga channel, where the Education Center is situated, the white, lemon green and blue colour attract the eyes. The hostel has the makings of a residential and will accommodate 118 students per night an increase from 78 students who were previously accommodated in the old structures at the park.

### Cheaper options

According to the Edward Asalu, the manager, Queen Elizabeth Protected Area, the new structure cost the institution more than Shs500M.

"We decided to put up this education centre/hostel following the overwhelling numbers of students that visit the park and the increasing number of schools being established in the country," Asalu said.

Asalu revealed that the facility hosts more than 300 students on average per week. The number is predicted to go higher in future. "Even when we established this new education centre, the number of students who use the facility is high, leaving us with no option but to transfer them to the old buildings so that we can accommodate 118 per night," Asalu said.

The facility is one of the revenue enhancements to the park as it will provide comfort to tourists. Besides accommodation, the centre will also disseminate information on conservation to the students.

"We wanted to impact conservation education from primary to university level so that they can take the information back home to their parents so that poaching is minimised," the manager said.

He noted that as their slogan stands 'conserving for generation', thus UWA intends to keep the young generations updated once they visit the park so that they appreciate the usefulness of conserving the park as one way of reducing the challenges faced.

"We believe that once we educate the young ones about the uses of the park and the reason we conserve the Fauna and Flora, we would have delivered the message to their parents who are engaged in poaching and with time, the challenge will reduce once they appreciate."

The modern hostel has flash toilets and indoor bathrooms in order



Elephants grazing in Queen Elizabeth National park. The rich wild life makes the park a popular tourism attraction. FILE PHOTO

for security purposes. UWA believes that Shs5,000 charge per night is affordable.

"We have a big plan for the Education centre. We want to be hosting 150 students per night, an increase from the present number of 78 and also put up a lecture hall and kitchen," says Asalu.

UWA has also established afford-

# 300

THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS THAT VISIT QUEEN ELIZABETH NATIONAL PARK EVERY WEEK. THESE WILL NOW BE ACCOMMODATED EASILY



UWA has built structures to provide budget accommodation for students and act as an awareness centre on conservation. PHOTO BY ENID NINSIMA

These are some of the attractions one can enjoy at the park...



**KAZINGA CHANNEL.** It is about 40m long adjoining Lake Gorge to Lake Edward. It has the perfect view of the park's major wildlife ventures. The shores of the lake attracts a large concentration of mammals, birds as well as reptiles all year around.

**BIRDING.** Varied habitats in Queen



Elizabeth National Park – lakeshore, swamp, grassland and forest – support a remarkable 612 species of birds – over 60 per cent of the 1,008 species of indigenous and migratory birds recorded in Uganda.



**TREE CLIMBING LIONS.** The famous tree-climbing lions of the Ishasha sector are found in large fig trees in the remote southern extremity of the park. Ishasha is 124kms from Mweya Safari Lodge so the return excursion takes the greater part of a day. These tree-dwelling lions prey on the Topi, Uganda Kob, and Cape Buffalo which graze Ishasha's beautiful vegetation.



**WILD BREAKFAST.** A bush breakfast is a must. At Mweya Safari lodge, guests go to a beautiful picnic spot via the Channel Track and Campsite 2 and eat their freshly prepared breakfast in the wildest setting.

able accommodation lodges to give an alternative while in the park at Mweya peninsula. Price ranges from Shs20,000-Shs300,000 and descent meals at Thembo Restaurant that is managed by the park. The bandas have self contained single, double and family rooms as well as non self-contained rooms.

### ABOUT THE GAME PARK

QENP is in the Western Region of Uganda, spanning the districts of Kasese, Kamwenge, Rubirizi, and Rukungiri. The park is approximately 400 kilometres (250 mi) by road south-west of Kampala, Uganda's capital and largest city. The town of Kasese is just outside the northeastern edge of the park, while the town of Rubirizi is just outside the park's southeastern boundaries.

The park includes the Maramagambo Forest and borders the Kigezi Game Reserve, the Kyambura Game Reserve, and the Kibale National Park in Uganda, and the Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Queen Elizabeth National Park occupies an estimated 1,978 square kilometres (764 sq mi). The park extends from Lake George in the north-east to Lake Edward in the south-west and includes the Kazinga Channel connecting the two lakes.

Wikipedia

Compiled from the internet