

free treatment

Doctors attend to patients at Bank of Baroda Jinja branch offices yesterday. About 600 patients received eye treatment and glasses at a health camp organised by Lions Club of Jinja in partnership with Bank of Baroda. Mr Ashwini Kumar, the managing director of Bank of Baroda, said the event came with the institute marking 65 years of banking services in Uganda.

PHOTO BY DENNIS EDEMA



Residents track down crocodiles for survival

Lucrative. Not only have residents turned to the crocodile teeth to reportedly treat diseases such as Measles, they are also selling their skins to belt and bags manufacturers.

BY RONALD SEEBE
editorial@ug.nationmedia.com

NAMAYINGO. Stories of crocodiles attacking people living near water bodies in Namayingo and Mayuge districts are very common. The risk is almost part of their lives.

But residents have now turned against the crocodiles and are tracking them down. This has become one of the most lucrative businesses.

Not only have residents turned to the crocodile teeth to reportedly treat diseases such as Measles, they are also selling their skins to small-scale manufacturers in the area and smuggling them across Kenya to

make handbags and belts, among other products while others are selling them as game meat.

Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), however, warns that this is a breach of wild life laws.

The discovery of a local crocodile-tracking method called "Akawaywa Ku Kibumba" (the hook on the liver), has made the tracking much easier. This was designed by a deceased fisherman called Tabu Wandaga, a resident of Lobango Village in Mutumba Sub-county more than 30 years ago.

Mr Gilisom Byanaku, a resident of Lobango Landing Site, says: "Crocodile teeth are very expensive with each tooth going for between Shs150,000 and Shs200,000."

He adds: "Selling crocodile teeth is more lucrative than fishing and can make one rich overnight although it is not easy to get a single crocodile tooth."

Mr Byanaku recalls how he was

about to lose his son to Measles but a concoction of crocodile teeth powder from a local herbalists cured him.

He explains that dried crocodile teeth were ground into powder, mixed with warm water and left to cool to room temperature before being administered orally to a child.

No medical backing

Daily Monitor cannot confirm that a concoction of crocodile teeth cures Measles because there are no medical confirmations to that effect.

Mr Byanaku adds that residents used to raise Shs200,000 to hire a Police or Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) officer to shoot dead the crocodiles that would prowl the villages but 'Akawaywa Ku Kibumba' method has so far left four young crocodiles dead.

"We are no longer spending such amounts of money on hiring gunmen," Mr Byanaku says.

Mr Peter Ouma, a resident of Lubango Landing Site in Mutumba Sub-county, Namayingo District, and son of Tabu, who discovered the rudimentary trapping method, says he grew up seeing his father and other men tracking crocodiles using wires from motorcycle clutches.

According to Mr Ouma, "A motorcycle clutch wire is folded into a 'pulley' form with four centres. Each

AMOUNT

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Market: Crocodile teeth are very expensive with each tooth going for between Shs150,000 and Shs200,000

briefly

Accident kills truck driver

BUIKWE: A lorry plying the Iganga-Kampala route lost control at Kitigoma Trading Centre in Njeru Municipality and knocked a tree, instantly killing one person. The Ssezibwa regional police spokesperson, Ms Hellen Butoto, on Friday identified the deceased as Ezira Kandole, who was the truck driver from Iganga District. She added that two of the truck's other occupants sustained serious injuries and are receiving treatment at Jinja Hospital. The deceased's body was taken to the same hospital for postmortem before handing it over to relatives. [Denis Edema]

Suspected thief lynched

BUIKWE: A man has been killed on allegations that he had stolen a pig in Ngongwe Sub-county in Buikwe District. The Ssezibwa regional police spokesperson, Ms Hellen Butoto, said the deceased was found with a pig that had earlier been reported to be missing from the area. According to Ms Butoto, the deceased was beaten into coma on Thursday by resider and by the time police came to his rescue, it was late. He died on his way to Kawolo Hospital. [Denis Edema]

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Namayingo residents track down crocodiles for survival

Voices

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"Selling crocodile teeth is more lucrative than fishing and can make one rich overnight although it is not easy to get a single crocodile tooth,"

MR GILISOM BYANAKU,
RESIDENT OF LOBAMGO
LANDING SITE

"UWA encourages tracking crocodiles alive not killing them and the reason we want them alive is to relocate them to other (safer) places like game parks for tourism. Killing a crocodile because one wants to extract its teeth to treat Measles is not the answer either. Measles is curable if one seeks treatment from health workers,"

MR GESSA
SIMPLICIOUS, THE UWA
SPOKESPERSON

centre is attached to one loose rope and a tin. At the four centres is where fresh liver of an animal is wrapped.

A rope holds the liver plus the hook while in water as it keeps sagging and rotating in water to attract crocodiles; while the tin works as an identification mark which keeps floating on water."

Mr Ouma says fresh liver is used because crocodiles can easily smell it and in the process, they surge towards it to swallow and take the hook along.

He says once the crocodile swallows the liver with the hook, it (the hook) enters its stomach.

"Since the wire of the hook cannot be digested because of the silver coating on it, after about four to five months, the crocodile's gizzard starts swelling and the food in the gizzard starts rotting. The crocodile then loses appetite and eventually dies after about nine to 10 months.

UWA speaks out

Mr Gessa Simplicious, the UWA spokesperson, says they are not aware of the rudimentary method locals are using to track crocodiles since their mandate is to protect Wildlife. He adds that killing crocodiles is illegal and they (UWA) condemn the act.

"We are sorry for not constructing crocodile cages in Namayingo but we are doing our best to see that we start building them and create awareness on how to conserve wildlife," he says.

He adds that UWA would wish to work with communities on how to conserve Wildlife than killing them because tracking and killing a crocodile does not solve the problem.

"UWA encourages tracking crocodiles alive not killing them and the reason we want them alive is to relocate them to other safer places such as game parks for tourism," he says.

He adds: "Killing a crocodile because one wants to extract its teeth to treat Measles is not the answer either. Measles is curable if one seeks treatment from health workers."

briefly

Accountant