

CASH
COW

Shs4bn

Revenue-sharing. Cash that has been given out by UWA to districts since 2003 as 20 percent revenue sharing to help them solve the human-wildlife problems which have persisted everywhere

NATURE TOURISM. Government has rationalised the wildlife protected areas network gazetted 25,981.57sq km as wildlife conservation areas. It is, however, estimated that 50 per cent of Uganda's wildlife resources still remain outside the protected areas, mostly on privately owned land. www.ugandawildlife.org



QUICK
FACTS

The Lion.

Threatened. Edward Asalu, the manager of Queen Elizabeth National Park estimates the number of lions in the park at 42 out of 400 in the whole country.



Human wildlife conflict: Communities demand compensation

In conflict. Last week 11 lions were poisoned in Queen Elizabeth in an escalation of hostility from communities towards wildlife. **Felix Basime and Enid Ninsiima** document the relationship between the people and the park.

ough investigation into the matter in order to bring culprits to book," the area boss notes. Kiviri Bwaruhanga, a local at Hamukungu believes that in the next 10 years, both lions and cows will be no more in the area if government does not make a deliberate move to save the situation.

Lions, a vulnerable species

Today, the lion occurs in fragmented populations in Sub-Saharan Africa and one in western India. It has been listed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List since 1996, as populations in African range countries declined by about 43 percent since the early 1990s.

"Government made a mistake to allow pastoralists in this sanctuary because the domestic animals compete with wild animals for pastures. We have kept domestic animals for wildlife." Tourism minister Prof. Ephraim Kamuntu said last week at Hamukungu fishing village in Lake Katwe sub-county, Kasese District.

The poisoning of a pride of 11 climbing lions at Hamukungu fishing village was the third incident since 2007 when 13 lions were poisoned. Later in 2010, eight lions were also poisoned all in the same park.

Edward Asalu, the manager of Queen Elizabeth National Park estimates the number of lions at 42 out of 400 in the whole country.

In 2012, a friendly elephant aka Mary was killed by poisoning by the community at Katunguru trading centre as the members alleged that it used to eat food from their kitchens.

Pastoralism versus conservation

"We have lost over 20 cows and many goats to these lions in two weeks, on top of many more lost in the last two months. We have tried to report to UWA but no response," Zeveiro Bulenge, a resident says. Problem animals" as the locals prefer to call them include the lion, the elephant, the buffalo, bush pigs and crocodiles.

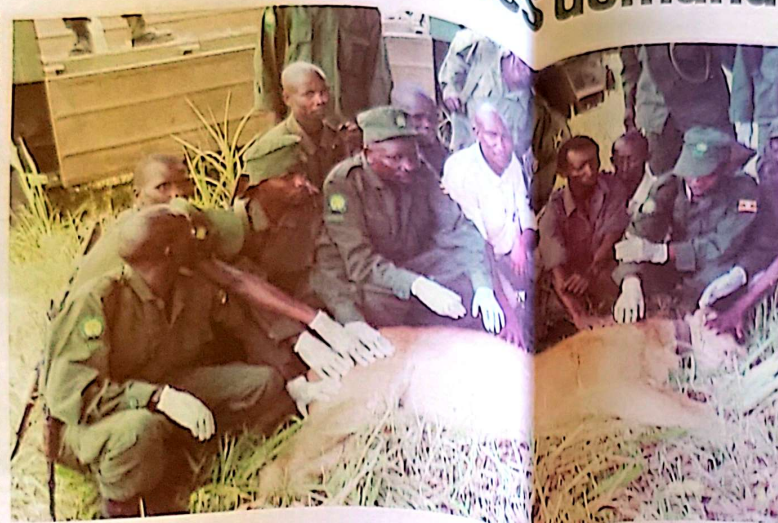
Bulenge also faults Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) for introducing a project of rearing lions amidst the community at the expense of their livelihood.

Mr Mwanda, the Executive Director of UWA denies that lions rear lions within the communities only that there is a project dubbed "Carnivores project" by an investor who marked lions for easy tracking by tourists. He says when tourists come; they switch on a GPS that locates easily where the lions are.

The lions were marked with a collar around their necks that links with the GPS machine.

In 2010, more than six lions were poisoned at the same spot after pastoralists complained of invasion. In the recent case, the lions were killed few kilometres from the people's homesteads. Patrick Beyunga, the Hamukungu local council chairperson attributes the poisoning of the lions to lack of response to complaints by pastoralists over the continued loss of domestic animals to wildlife.

"We have lost national income in the deaths of lions but UWA relationship with the community here has worsened. We know the 20 per cent revenue sharing but the situation cannot remain like this. Their response to such problems has been poor; you can see the outcome. I call for thor-



“We are strengthening our relationship with communities. This is through deploying appropriate staff. The process takes time but in the next two to three months we should be able to know how many we need and where.” Sam Mwanda, Executive Director, UWA.

invasion of the gardens.

Last year, two people were injured by stray bullets as security and UWA wardens pursued a stray elephant from gardens in Rukooki, Kasese District. This was after an elephant strayed from the nearby Queen Elizabeth National Park into the cotton and maize gardens of residents of Kihara village, Kihara ward, Kasese Municipality last month. Queen Elizabeth National park is the only national park that has sanctuaries where the communities graze domestic animals. These include Hamukungu, Kasenyi, Kahendero, Katunguru and Katwe -Kabatoto. In all these areas, pastoralists graze in the national park even when government gave them freeland in Biganda, Ibuga, Kabukero, Mkojo, Rwehingo, Nyakakindo after settling in the park

from DR Congo in 2007.

Revenue sharing
UWA gives 20 per cent part of their gate revenue collections to the communities that surround the park as part of the tourism industry, however this has not solved the wildlife-human conflict.

UWA funds are used by the local authorities on interventions to the conflict such as digging trenches at Isango, Kanyangeya, bee hives at Kidorizi, Karusandara, Rumuri in Rubirizi, planting thorny trees, as well as community projects like staff quarters at Hamukungu primary school at Kahokya primary school, dormitories at Hamukungu Secondary School, among others.

Close to Shs 4 billion has been given

Shs362m

THE AMOUNT OF MONEY THAT UGANDA WILDLIFE AUTHORITY PAID OUT TO KASESE DISTRICT IN REVENUE-SHARING FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2016/2017

Problem animal. A lion captured by UWA officials in Katunguru in 2012. PHOTO BY FELIX BASIME.

STRIKING BALANCE



UWA's role.

UWA which is mandated under the law to manage and conserve wildlife in Uganda, fronts collaboration with the concerned communities and respective local authorities to curb animal invasion of the gardens.

The destruction of their habitat due to human activities compels the wild animals to enter human settlements in search of food and water leading to conflict.

out by UWA to districts since 2003 as 20 per cent revenue sharing to help them solve the human-wildlife problems which have persisted everywhere.

Admiration in spite of earnings

Despite all this, residents say that if UWA does not compensate, government should clear their agricultural bank loans to save their properties since elephants eat only ready maize and other foods.

According to Rubirizi district chairperson, Selevester Agubashongoreera, hippos escaped from the park and are living with communities in Rubirizi.

"Our MPs are doing us a disservice by not amending the UWA Act which does not spell out the compensation issues. We need the Act amended so that nobody is offended by the wild animals we protect. My people have lost their lives and properties but they have remained in agony because the law does not allow compensation to the losses caused," argues Kule Joseph Muranga, Rubirizi Resident District Commissioner.

UWA Executive Director, Sam Mwanda argues that even if UWA does electric wire fencing around the park as locals want, this single intervention cannot solve the problem of wildlife - human conflict given the population increase and pressure on land.

However, the tourism minister says that the new bill before parliament on the wildlife-human conflict is going to solve some of the problems like compensation, harsh penalties to poachers among others.

Queen Elizabeth National Park has 10 fishing enclaves or sanctuaries that include, Hamukungu, Kasenyi, Katunguru, Katwe-kabatoro, Kayanja and Kahendero all in Kasese with pastoralist, traders and fishermen, Katunguru, Kashaika in Rubirizi for fishermen and traders; Rwehishama and Kishenyi in Bukungiri for traders and fishermen but the park is surrounded by farmers in every district.



"We have given out a lot of money to the parishes adjacent to the park as one way of enabling the communities to sustain themselves since they are the most affected by problem animals but the situation seems not to be changing. Wildlife conflict has remained due to animals' adaptation to the new methods. UWA relocated four crocodiles last year to safer areas in order to save lives of fishing communities in the park."

SIMPPLICIOUS GESSA, UWA PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER

INTERVENTION

Uganda Wildlife Authority's executive director Samuel Mwanda says several interventions are being worked on including recruitment of more staff.

"We are strengthening our relationship with communities. This is through deploying appropriate staff" Mr Mwanda said. At the moment, the authority does not have enough staff and is in the process of recruiting more.

Other interventions include collaring of the lions and clearing of the shrubs around the fishing villages in addition to improving intelligence.

IF I HAD TO BE SOMEWHERE IN UGANDA...

...It would definitely be...



Kasubi Tombs:

KAMPALA. I would be at the Kasubi Tombs for it is a major example of an architectural achievement using local raw materials such as grass thatch, mud, wattle and daub. It has four royal tombs that lie in the Muzibu azazi Mbaraga, the main dome-shaped structure at the site where remains of the Buganda Kings are laid to rest. [Simon Nalumba, teacher]



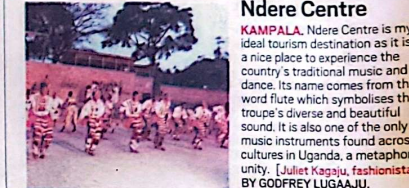
Kazinga Channel

KASESE. I would be at the plains of Kazinga Channel because they offer breathtaking view points for spotting game. Through embarking on a game tracking trip, you can see the diverse wildlife in this area within its natural environment. Animals such as buffaloes, elephants and others live within the grassland thickets and in the channel. [Rosevelyn Nakiranda, trader]



Napak mountain

NAPAK. I would be at the mountain because it offers breath taking panoramic views of the Karamoja planes and mountain ranges in the distance. It is also a good destination for adventures such as hiking and trekking. It is also Karamoja's third highest mountain with lush vegetation which makes it look nice from a distance. [Peter Bwaruhanga, pharmacist]



BY GODFREY LUGAAJU.