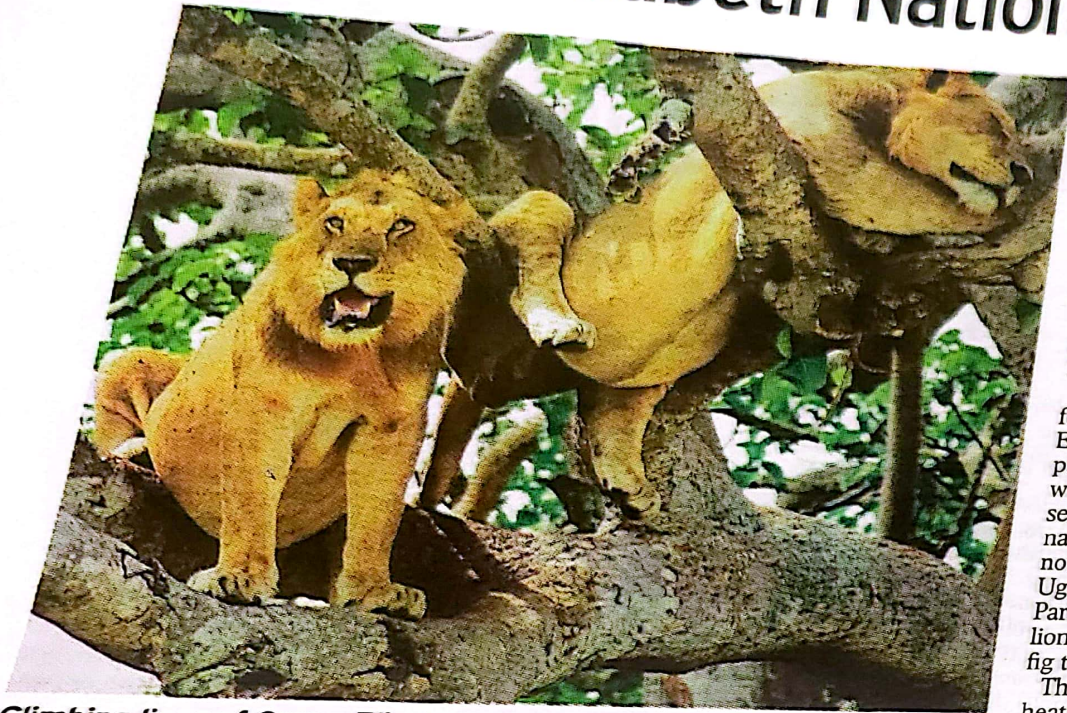


Queen Elizabeth National Park listed among Africa's best



Climbing lions of Queen Elizabeth National Park in western Uganda

By Gerald Tenywa

Any Ugandan who goes out of the country for honeymoon or wildlife expeditions is leaving a better deal in their own country. This is because Queen Elizabeth National Park in western Uganda appears on the new list of seven natural wonders of Africa. The list was released over the weekend by *Nat Geo Travel*, also known as *National Geographic Traveler Magazine*.

The eye-catching tree climbing lions found in Ishasha sector of Queen Elizabeth National Park put Uganda's park ahead of other parks. "The only wild cats that safari-goers are likely to see climbing trees in most of Africa's national parks are leopards. This is not the case in the Ishasha area, in Uganda's Queen Elizabeth National Park, where visitors can expect to see lions dangling from large branches of fig trees," stated *Nat Geo Travel*.

The magazine added: "When the heat of the day sets in, most lions recline under a shady bush or tree,

but the lions of Ishasha are inclined to climb up the tree. It's also believed that they do it to escape the flies. Visit on a hot day and it's likely there could be up to five lions on one tree at one time."

The magazine covers world exploration trips and travel tips to pleasure hunters. The new release has listed Queen Elizabeth in the seventh place among the natural wonders.

"We all know the tried and true travel experiences in Africa, like spotting wildlife on the plains of the Masai Mara or tasting wine in the vineyards of the Cape," said Mary Holland, an experienced travel writer for *Nat Geo Travel*. "But the very large continent of Africa is home to 54 countries brimming with otherworldly natural wonders and distinctive cultural experiences. Here are less expected African experiences for the traveller looking to go deeper."

Ethiopia's Danakil Depression was on top of the natural wonders,

followed by Liuwa Plain National Park in Zambia and third was red rock formation in Tsingy Rouge, Madagascar. The fourth was Namaqualand, South Africa and then Taghazout, Morocco in fifth place. Makgadikgadi Pan of Botswana lies in sixth position of the natural wonders of Africa.

What others say

Josy Muhangi, the community relations manager at Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), described the tree climbing lions as iconic species and that they are part of Uganda's unique heritage. He said the park is also endowed with large mammals, such as elephants.

Stephen Asimwe, the chief executive officer of Uganda Tourism Board (UTB), said Uganda remains largely unknown in the tourism world despite its endowment. He said the endorsement from a credible media house that leads in conservation is good for Uganda. "It is going to help us attract the numbers," Asimwe said.