

# UGANDA'S NATURAL RESOURCES; WETLANDS CONSERVATION ISSUES

UGANDA WILDLIFE SOCIETY POLICY BRIEF No.1. 2018



**UGANDA WILDLIFE SOCIETY**  
Plot 39 Babiha Avenue, Kololo, Kampala  
P.O. Box 7422, Kampala, Uganda  
Tel: 256-41-530891  
Fax: 256-41-530264  
E-mail: [uws@uws.or.ug](mailto:uws@uws.or.ug)

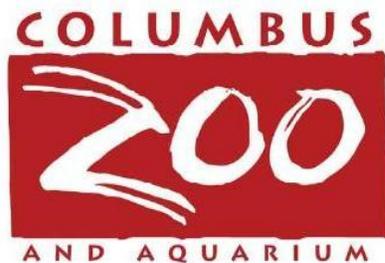


The Republic of Uganda

COPYRIGHT© 2018, Uganda Wildlife Society and Department of Natural Resources, Mayuge District Local Government, Mayuge District

Reproduction of this publication for educational or non-commercial purposes is authorized without prior written permission from the copyright holders provided the source is fully acknowledged. Publication for sale or other commercial purposes is prohibited.

**Citation:** Nyadoi Priscilla, Laster Stoney Ogolla and Aram Thomas. 2018. Uganda's natural resources; wetlands conservation issues. Uganda Wildlife Society Policy Brief No.1 2018. Uganda Wildlife Society, Kampala Uganda.



This policy brief has been prepared with financial assistance of the Columbus Zoo and Aquaria. The views expressed, the information and material presented and the geographical and geopolitical designations used in this brief do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of Columbus Zoo and Aquaria or any other organisation/institutions/individuals providing funds to UWS.

**December, 2018**

## **Introduction, Wetlands Conservation Issues**

Uganda's 1995 Constitution, the supreme law of the country makes provision for protection of natural resources including, land, water, wetlands, mineral, oil, fauna and flora by the state on behalf of the people. (Constitution of Uganda, XIII). Furthermore, XXVII mandates the state to among others promote public awareness of the need to prevent/minimize their damage by pollution, create and develop parks, reserves and recreation areas and, implement, environmentally sound energy policies, and rational use of these resources so as to ensure conservation for the current and future generations. A number of resource specific supporting policies and laws exist, to enable achievement of the constructional provisions for most of Uganda's natural resources and environment in general. The 1996 Uganda Wildlife Statute provides guidelines for wildlife management, including among others enhancing benefit sharing through wildlife user rights and public participation in management, similar provisions are in the 1995 Wetlands Policy. Some of these policies and laws have been reviewed, enhancing management and yielding positive impacts for example with wildlife in National Parks while for others, like the wetlands and their biodiversity, the declines continue (NEMA, 2018).

According to the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) state of Environment Report 2016/2017, Uganda's wetlands cover currently is 8.6% from 13% in the 1995. The annual rate of loss is 846 square kilometres and a projection of total loss by 2040 unless effective measures are taken to stem the problem (NEMA, 2018). Threatened, Uganda's wetlands are also home and or breeding grounds to some of Uganda's important, endangered and population declining species like, the Grey crowned cranes, the Shoebills, Waterbucks, etc.

### **Recent findings based on Lake Victoria Shores/wetland wildlife species case study**

To create public awareness and enable capacity building to support policy implementation processes, Uganda Wildlife Society within her mandate of promoting conservation of Wildlife and Environment in Uganda through research, advocacy/policy influence and conservation initiatives, recently conducted research on the conservation status of Grey crowned cranes, Shoebills and Waterbucks in the Lake Victoria Shores habitats in Mayuge District. Findings of this research done in collaboration with the Mayuge District Local Government Department of Natural Resources and involving 101 members of the communities living adjacent to the lake shore, revealed among others that except in habitats under strict nature protection by government conservation agencies (Uganda Wildlife Authority, National Forestry Authority) and other conservation interventions by a hospital administration), populations of the Grey Crowned Cranes, Shoebills and Waterbucks in the Lake Victoria Sores in Mayuge District are declining.

The decline in Grey Crowned Cranes, Shoebills and Waterbucks populations in Mayuge District, the case study found was being caused by loss of habitats to rice and sugar cane growing, settlements, sand mining, deforestation and, illegal hunting. Private sector to which the Sugar cane and rice grown are respectively sold to Kakira Sugar cane factory, Mayuge Sugar Company and, local rice milling plants that sell the same to exporters and hence conservation efforts need to engage these stakeholders too, to realize positive changes on the species populations and habitats. Consequently, in this policy brief we give the following recommendations on way forward.

## **Recommendations from the Lake Victoria Shores wildlife species case study**

To stem continuing loss of the targeted species populations and habitats, in this policy brief we recommend that;

- 1) Mayuge District local government department of natural resources and partners;
  - Sensitize local communities and, the private sector (the Sugar cane/Rice factories/traders, timber dealers, sand miners, fisher folk and others) on how the wildlife species and their habitats need to be conserved, policies and laws guiding use and management of wetlands and their resources, and on best practices for use and management of these resources.
  - Develop ecotourism enterprises based on the wildlife species and these should engage and be beneficial to the local communities living adjacent the species habitats.
  - Develop, promote and implement conservation strategy engaging the local communities, private Sector, Civil Society and Local Government (bonded by long term Memorandum of Understanding and local ordinances), in joint efforts for wetlands-habitats restoration and conservation of the targeted and related wildlife species.
  - Use the information and stakeholder partnership proposed for implementation of the district ordinance of 2012 on environment management.
- 2) The Conservation agencies, Ministries, and Parliament use these findings in formulation of future policies and guidelines on stakeholders' participation in conservation efforts for wetlands and wildlife species not only in the Lake Victoria Shores but in related places elsewhere in Uganda.
- 3) The academia and researchers also need to conduct further studies to evaluate effectiveness of local government, local communities and private sector partnerships in joint efforts for conservation, in achievement of habitat restoration and conservation of wetlands and inhabiting wildlife species.

## **References**

- National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), 2018. NEMA 12<sup>th</sup> State of Environment Report 2016/2017). NEMA, Kampala, Uganda.
- Ministry of Water and Environment, Directorate of Water Resources Management and Lake Victoria Environment Management Project II. 2018. Lake Victoria Environment Management Project II Preserving Lake Victoria: Transforming Livelihoods. Entebbe, Uganda.
- Priscilla Nyadoi., Laster Stoney Ogola and Aramu Thomas, 2018. Elucidating Conservation needs of Grey crowned crane, Shoebill and Waterbucks in Mayuge District, eastern Uganda. Uganda Wildlife Society, Kampala, Uganda.