

New recording of the endemic Aloe tororoana species in Osukuru hills, Eastern Uganda



Aloe tororoana (Reynolds) is a vulnerable species both internationally and within Uganda. It was previously recorded to occur only on Tororo Rock, specifically on rock cliffs at the hill summit. Study by the researchers in Busitema University and Islamic University In Uganda (IUIU) investigated the distribution, population pattern, phenology, use and conservation status of endemic *Aloe tororoana* (Reynolds) in Tororo District, Eastern Uganda.

The study was led by Dr. Edward Andama of Busitema University. Other members included Ms Gauden Nantale of Busitema University, Dr. Sarah Nachuha of IUIU, Mr. Ejotre Imran of IUIU and Mr. Anguti Silas, the Tororo District Forest Officer. The immediate objectives

of the study were to:

- (i) Determine population patterns and distribution of the species,
- (ii) Monitor phenology patterns of the species,
- (iii) Document indigenous knowledge and use of the species and
- (iv) Document threats to the survival of the species.



Juvenile aloe tororoana on the rock surface

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New bird species for Uganda at Lutembe Bay.

A new migrant species, The Great Knot was recorded at Lutembe Bay on 8th December 2010 by a NatureUganda (NU) monitoring team. This was during the monthly counts that started in 2009.

Since 1994, NU has been conducting biannual Waterfowl counts at 33 sites usually in January and July of every year. However in 2009, monthly counts were started at Lutembe and Nakiwogo bays and NU has been able to accumulate information on migration, feeding and roosting patterns of both Palearctic migrants and resident species of these two sites.

On the afternoon of 8th December 2010 at Lutembe bay, Roger Skeen and Henry Seguya sighted a rare Knot species.

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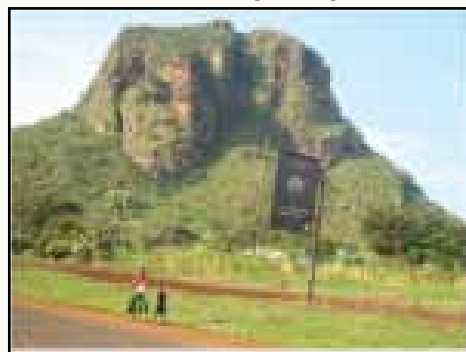
The preliminary findings of the study indicate that *Aloe tororoana* also occurred in Usukuru hills which is adjacent (about 1.5 kms) to Tororo



Parts of Osukuru hills where the species was recorded

Rock. Generally, *Aloe tororoana* occurred on bare and open rock surfaces with minimum presence of other vegetation cover. *Aloe tororoana* locally known as Omulakaru (in Lusamia language) was recorded to occur on steep rocks or cliffs on both Tororo rock and Osukuru hills. The species did not occur at lower areas, highly vegetated hill sides, the hill bottoms and community cultivated areas.

This is not like other aloe species in the area which tend to occur on flat and under ordinary soil conditions. Tororo rock and Osukuru hills have hanging cliffs which were formed due to geological and



Tororo rock where *Aloe tororoana* was first discovered

chemical processes. This made these hills unique habitats for *A. tororoana*. Clusters of it were mostly found hanging cliffs and rock crevices or holes where there was accumulation of humus or dust particles.

The rock crevices do not hold water for long as the water runs down or quickly evaporates from the rock surface due to heat and exposure. The team noted that the *Aloe tororoana* population in Osukuru was the largest compared to that on Tororo rock.

The team also noted that the Government of Uganda recently discovered large phosphate deposits (see NewVision Jan 2007) in the same Osukuru hills. Madhivani group of Company is set to mine these deposits in the 26 square kilometre of the Osukuru hill area for manufacture of chemical fertilizers. As such when mining starts in Osukuru hills, this may negatively impact on the survival of so far the largest population of *Aloe tororoana* in the habitat.

Although there was no documented record of the use of the plant by humans, the study found out that the plant was extensively collected from the wild by the adjacent local communities and processed for treating a wide variety of human and livestock illnesses. These included fevers, cough, stomach pains in humans and poultry diseases.

The current threats to the survival of the species include rock degradation due to farming, rock excavation, settlements (house construction), bush burning, livestock and grazing.

Information from this short study clearly reveals that *Aloe tororoana* may have a wider distribution than



Rock mining in Tororo rock

reported earlier. There may also be several important but barely known plant species and other biodiversity resources out in the wild occurring in different parts of Uganda but their distribution is incomplete or are yet to be discovered. Several of these biodiversity resources just like *Aloe tororoana* do not occur in formally gazetted or protected areas. As such they are facing unprecedented pressure of degradation from several human activities.

With the current increase in degradation of the natural habitats due to expansion of agriculture activities, spread of settlements, extraction of mineral resources and in addition the impact of climate change, such plant biodiversity may disappear from the earth's surface without full understanding of their potential for human use. This study is an eye opening that there are many biodiversity resources still unexplored and yet are at the verge of becoming extinct. Our proposal is for the government and the stakeholders to get interested in supporting endeavors to study indigenous biodiversity especially those in non gazetted areas or private lands.

This study was a joint effort by TBA alumni in Busitema University and Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU) with support from Tropical Biology Association (TBA), small grants program, Busitema University and IUIU. The research team thanks TBA, the management of the two universities especially the vice-chancellor of Busitema University Professor J.N. Mary Okwakol, and the Rector of IUIU Dr. Ahmed Kaweesi Sengendo for their support.

By Dr. Edward Andama
Busitema University

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Dear member,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to vol. 15.1 of the **Nature Uganda Newsletter, the Naturalist.**

I extend my sincere greetings and wish you a prosperous 2011. Thank you once again for entrusting me and other EC members with the leadership of the society for another transition term of five months to May 2011. As you may have heard, we didn't nominate new EC members last AGM because of constitutional obligations which were not fulfilled. I therefore call upon all of you to nominate members early enough for the next EC to start operations after May 2011. As usual, EC's challenge is to steer the Organization to greater heights. I count on your support, commitment and ideas to strengthen the society throughout this year.

As you may remember, we communicated last year that the membership subscription renewal will always follow the calendar year and expire on 31st December of each year. The new arrangement means that membership (for all) expired on 31st December 2010.

I therefore call upon everyone to renew their membership for the calendar year 2011 to enable us to continue serving you. **The m-sente mobile money number** which will ease membership renewals is **0713 540 719**. We opted for UTL service because it receives and sends money to all other networks and please, always remember to add withdrawal costs.

I am happy to inform you that through our vigorous campaigns, NU managed to secure some funds from the Whitley Award, RSPB and USAID STAR and the society is still involved in vigorous fundraising campaigns with proposals already submitted for the winding down projects like Echuya in Kabale, and PEMA in Bushenyi. I extend sincere thanks and appreciation to all our development partners and stake holders and wish you good reading as we continue to promote the understanding, appreciation and conservation of nature 🐾

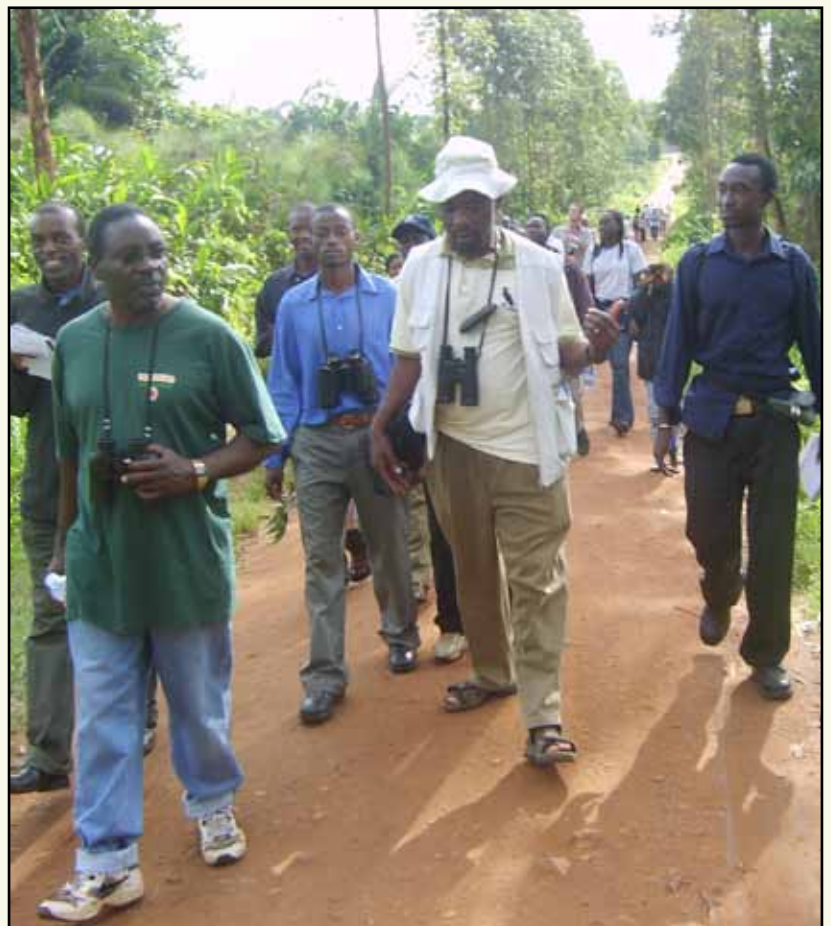
From
Mr. Paul Mafabi
Chairman-**Nature Uganda**



Nature Uganda holds its 18th Annual General Meeting

Nature Uganda held its 18th Annual General Meeting and the 101th of the East Africa Natural History Society (EANHS) on the 3rd December 2011 at the Uganda Museum in Kampala. During this AGM, a new Executive Committee was not elected but the old one was given a transition period of 5

The sponsor category was adopted to be added as one of the membership categories to cater for organizations and individuals who support the objects of the society but don't belong to any of the existing categories. The Executive Committee was assigned a responsibility to work out details



Members on one of the nature walks

months up to the next AGM to allow for enough preparations in line with the amended constitutional requirements.

The revised constitution requires all nominations to be sent to the secretariat 21 days before the AGM date and a nominated member must approve his/her nomination. During this AGM, some resolutions were passed.

of who qualifies and how much he/she pays to be in this category. A motion was also passed to have our financial year start in January and end in December which implied that the next AGM was scheduled for April/May 2011 and not the usual November/December plan 🐾

FROM THE FIELD

A date with the Nightjars in MFNP

Trips to Murchison Falls NP have always produced surprising moments. In Jan 2011, having ended our bird monitoring counts in Rabongo areas a bit late, meant we were never going to reach Paraa earlier than 8:00 pm. Time check 7:20 pm – 7:40 pm, about 10 Km on Sambiya – Rabongo road, we counted about 50 NightJars of different species mostly Standard - winged, Slender - tailed and Long - tailed Nightjars.

On 23rd Dec 2010, a morning count, 6:00 am - 6:35 am from Sambiya junction to Bugungu gate junction produced 17 male and 7 female Standard - winged Nightjars and 4 of other species. Another morning count on 24th Dec 2010 revealed 33 male and 21 female Standard – winged Nightjars, 4 Slender – tailed Nightjars, a single Swamp Nightjar with 8 road kills. We are always amazed with the short feeding time these birds have, not more than 30 minutes of active time morning or evening. It is not surprising that it is at such times when motorists are tempted to move faster ending up in road kills. Take care next time you are caught up 🐾

George Kaphu and Michael Opige

An innocent soul given a death sentence

Young boys from the Northern part of this country are known for eating birds. Irrespective of the size, they will share the hunt. However, this habit seems to be slowly fading off. Thanks to school engagements or could it be that the birds are no longer there to be hunted. Interestingly, if a species is not eaten, it will still be killed for some reason.

This Barn Owl met its fate having been accused of collecting rats to the roof of an abandoned hut, a sign of serial deaths in the family if the Owl remains alive. We still need awareness to reverse 🐾 such thinking



The injured Barn Owl with injured feather

Michael Opige
NatureUganda

Karamoja Apalis, why all of a sudden?

This is an East African endemic with the Ugandan population mostly seen in Mt Moroto areas. Having monitored sites in Iriri for over 10 years, it was interesting to have this much localized species in two of our sites for the very first time in February 2011. Each of the sites had three individuals. Iriri is about 70 Km from Mt Moroto but has many of Acacia drepanolobium which is loved by this bird.

Could it be that the range for this bird is wider than it was thought or could it be that there have been just some local movements? It is hard to believe that we could have been ignoring single individuals if they showed up and quickly disappeared. The most ideal situation is the breeding record within the surroundings which may inform conservation efforts 🐾

Michael Opige- NatureUganda

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The bird appeared to be an adult in non breeding plumage and its general size and dark spotting on the breast sides revealed enough features of either a Red or a Great Knot but the pictures taken then were of poor quality. All doubts were dispelled on the 20th December 2010 when Achilles Byaruhanga captured good photographs which clearly show that the bird is a GREAT KNOT. This constitutes the first record of this species in Uganda.

Lutembe bay is a sheltered shallow bay on the northern shores of Lake Victoria in Wakiso District on Entebbe road with scattered mud islands often covered by water



The Great Knot

hyacinth. The bay has many Palearctic migrants particularly huge congregations of gulls and terns and other interesting species including the Caspian Tern, Hottentot Teal, Temminck's Stint and Broad-billed Sandpiper which are vagrant visitors in addition to the masses of ducks and waders 🐾

By Roger .Q. Skeen.
NatureUganda

Two new Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) agreements in Kasyoha Kitomi CFR



Agreement signing between NFA and Community chair persons of Ndangaro and Mwongyera witnessed by NU, WWF, LG and community members

PEMA II project aims at creating more sustainable and equitable forest utilization and management focusing on rural communities. The lack of capacity in terms of skills and opportunity in civil society and local communities to manage environmental resources undermines the potential for sustainable development. Therefore, strengthening institutions and empowering these people are important strategy components. Through building partnerships with a well informed and empowered community, this challenge can be met.

The project facilitated the formation and legal registration of 7 Second Level Community Based Organizations (SL CBOs) including Butoha Twetungure Turinde Ebyobuhangwa Association (BTEA), Kanywambogo Environmental and Development Association (KEDA), Rwajere Parish Tree Planting Association (RPTPA), Buzenga Environment and Conservation Association (BUECA), Bitooma Abetereine Twebiseho Association (BATA), Mwongyera Parish Environmental Conservation Association (MPECA) and Ndangaro Environment and Conservation Association (NECA). These have been provided with tools and mechanisms to participate in equitable decision making about the environment and the resources they depend on through CFM arrangements.

According to the guidelines for implementing Collaborative Forest Management in Uganda, the process undergoes nine steps. Currently, the project has been able to facilitate the signing of 2 CFM agreements for the 2 SL CBOs of MPECA and NECA with NFA. This is in addition to the 5 CFM agreements by 5 SL CBOs of BUECA, BTEA, KEDA, RPTPA and BATA signed previously with NFA.

In regards to CFM process in Uganda, Nature Uganda has made a very remarkable achievement with a total of 11 agreements (4 with four sub counties around Echuya CFR in Kabale and Kisoro districts and 7 with 7 parishes surrounding Kasyoha Kitomi CFR in Bushenyi, Rubirizi, Nsiika and Ibanda districts) out of a total of 28 CFM agreements so far signed in the whole country.

Raising awareness in communities about the values of the forest and its resources, their rights to benefit from these resources and the process through which they can claim them has contributed greatly to successful implementation of the process. This involved production and distribution of information posters, video shows, radio talk shows, community drama, exposure visits and community sensitization meetings which aimed at increasing community understanding of the local, national and global values thus achievement of Nature Uganda's mission.

With CFM agreements, there are good relationships between NFA staff and communities thus fewer conflicts. Community attitudes, knowledge and practices towards the forest are positive and better, communities are empowered to share authority and make decisions, co-management of the forest through joint patrols with NFA thus improved community sense of ownership and responsibility in forest conservation.

By Rogers Niwamanya

Project officer PEMA II

Scientific data available at Nature Uganda offices

- Important Bird Areas in Uganda directory by Achilles Byaruhanga, Pantaleon Kasoma and Derek Pomeroy
- Bi-annual census of water birds at 33 sites
- Species Action Plan processes for Blue Swallow, Grauer's Rush Warbler, Shoebill and the Grey-crowned Crane.
- Important Bird Areas in Uganda. Status and Trends 2008
- Important Bird Areas in Uganda. Status and Trends 2009
- Important Bird Areas in Africa directory
- Ecological Baseline Surveys of Lake Bisina-Opeta and Lake Mburo-Nakivale wetlands systems 2009.

ESD Day Celebrations in Kisumu Kenya.

The 2nd July 2010 was a memorable day for the Lake Victoria Catchment Environment Education Project (LVCEEP) Uganda pupils, students and Community members who won most of the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) theme competitions for 2010 in Kisumu. The theme for the celebrations was "Coping and lessening the effects of climate change in the Lake Victoria Catchment". Various pupils and students participated by making art pieces/models, writing essays and the school best practices "greening initiatives". The ESD competition is an annual regional event for the LVCEEP operating in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

Uganda won in essay writing, art pieces/models and school best practices "greening initiatives" as highlighted below:

The winners in the above categories included

Category	Essays	Art	Best practices
Primary school category	2nd	2nd	1st
Secondary school category	1st	1st	1st
PTC category	2nd	1st	1st

Muyanja Derrick from Kaswa Education Centre for primary school essay, Sumayiya Nakabuye from St. Gregory P/S Butende for primary art, Ms. Namuddu Margret from St. Mary of Lourdes P/S Kisojo for primary schools best practices, Nyakaana Aloysius Gonzaga from St. Henry's College Kitovu for secondary school essay, Namanya Peter from Blessed Sacrament SS Kimaanya for secondary school art, Richard Otimong from St. Anthony's SSS Kayunga for secondary school best practices, Zalwango Harriet from Ndegeya Core PTC for PTC essay, Ogwang Raymond from Kabulasoke Core PTC for PTC art and Isimbwa George from St. Augustine's PTC Butiiti- Kyenjojo for PTC best practices.

The LVCEEP project focuses on the sustainable management of the Lake Victoria catchment and brings about improved livelihoods through Environmental Education and Education for Sustainable Development (EE/ESD). It involves



Part of the delegation from Uganda posing with their awards

school pupils, Teachers, Teacher Training Colleges (PTCs), community groups and local government leaders and departments in selected sites in the catchment. The target groups involved are able to see the reciprocal influence of poverty, environmental destruction and degradation in the Lake Victoria catchment and the mitigating impacts of the Environmental Education. In Uganda, this project is operating in districts of Masaka and Kyenjojo.

By

Tonny Mutagubya and Ada Nshemereirwe

LVCEEP-Masaka

December 2010 - February 2011

December 2010:

- An immature **Montagu's Harrier** seen at Ggaba waterworks on 2nd is an interesting record as it is rarely recorded in the Kampala area.
- A single individual of the **Fischer's Lovebird** seen at Ggaba on 5th may be a new Ugandan species or perhaps an escape?
- A single **Plain Martin** seen at Ggaba on 5th is an interesting record for the Kampala area.
- A **casualty African Crake** seen on the road at Kamwokya on 7th makes the forth Kampala record.
- An individual of the **Great Knot** was seen on Lutembe bay from 8th to 20th December and was still present on 5th Jan 2011 when confirmation visits were made. This makes the first record of the species for Uganda and Eastern Africa in general.
- A female **Northern Shoveler** at Nakiwogo Bay recorded on 9th marked the second record of the species for Uganda and the first for this site.
- Two individuals of the **Caspian Tern** recorded at Nakiwogo bay on 9th make the first record of the species for this site.
- A pale phase adult **Booted Eagle** recorded over Port Bell on 18th is a palearctic migrant rarely sighted in Kampala.
- A flock of 15 **Lesser Blue-eared Starling** recorded at Lusanja-Kitezi road on 21st is unusual for this type of habitat.
- Two individuals of the **Orange-cheeked Waxbill** recorded at Semliki National Park on 26th further confirm this recent addition to the Uganda bird list.

- A single **White-naped Pigeon spotted** in a flock of Olive Pigeons at Semliki National Park on 27th is rare and not easily seen as it is commonly among flocks of Olive Pigeons.
- A **Congo Serpent Eagle** seen well at Semliki National Park on 28th further confirms this recent addition to the Uganda bird list.

January 2011

- Two individuals of the **African Skimmer** seen at Lutembe Bay on 5th confirm habitat use of the site by this species, which was last recorded at the site in January 2001.

*The Northern Shovelers*

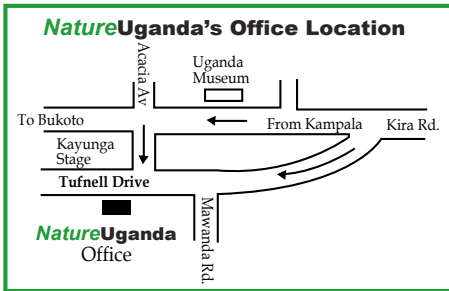
- A single **Bocage's Bush Shrike** seen near Mpigi on 8th is an interesting record for this site.
- **Fulvous Whistling Duck:** A count of 2,214 at Kibimba rice scheme reservoir 11th makes the highest record of this species for Uganda so far.
- A count of 67 individuals of the **Black Heron** at Doho rice scheme on 12th makes the highest count for Uganda So far.

- Two individuals of the **Lesser Jacana** recorded at the Airstrip Ponds in Sangobay on 18th is interesting as this species was last recorded at the site in July 2000.
- Two adults of the **Allen's Gallinule** were recorded for the first time on Lake Mburo on 24th.
- A single individual of the **Caspian Tern** recorded in a roost of 2,400 Gull-billed Terns at Lake Munyanyange on 25th makes it the first record of the species at this site.
- A high count of 904 individuals of the **African Skimmer** on the Kasinga Channel on 27th makes this highest record of the species for this site.

February 2011

- Six individuals of the **Karamoja Apalis** were recorded around Katakwi along the Soroti-Moroto road on 1st. This species is very rarely recorded in such numbers making this the highest record for Uganda
- Other unusual sightings for this period include the **Common Buffon Quail** seen in Lutembe on 4th, 15 individuals of the **Little Ringed Plover**; a single **Greater Painted Snipe** recorded at Entebbe sewage works on 4th and the **Grey Plover** seen at the same site on 9th.
- The record count of 209 individuals of the **Red-knobbed Coot** recorded in Nakiwogo Bay on 10th makes this the highest count of the species for Uganda

Contributors: Roger Skeen, Achilles Byaruhanga, and Derek Pomeroy.



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Institutions	70,000	\$90
Family	25,000	\$30
Full member	20,000	\$20
Students	5,000	\$15

*Students category caters for primary, secondary and undergraduates in Tertiary Institutions.

INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS

- Bishop Barham College
- Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust
- Children's Rights Advocacy & Lobby Mission Africa
- Geography Dept. Makerere University
- Makerere University Conservation Biology Association (MUCOBA)
- Green Hill Academy
- Mbogo College School
- Ndegeya Core PTC
- Kalinabiri Secondary School
- St. Josephs Girls S.S Nsambya
- St. Josephs S.S Naggalama
- Uganda Coalition for Crisis Prevention
- Kampala Parents School

Monthly Activities

Date	Activity
19th March	Nature walk in Entebbe Peninsula and sewage works
22nd-25th April	Easter Excursion at Nabugabo Sand beach
14th May	World Migratory Birds Day at Lutembe Bay
18th June	Herps tour at Uganda Reptile centre-Entebbe
July 1st - 15th	waterfowl counts

Corporate Members

- Adventure Trails Uganda
- Abacus African Vacations
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- Africa Adventure Safaris
- African View Safaris
- Alliance Francaise
- Barclays Bank Uganda Limited
- Bird Uganda Safaris
- Bunyonyi Safaris Ltd
- Chimpaze sanctuary & Wildlife Conservation Trust - Ngamba
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Concord International Travel Bureau
- Credit Uganda Tours Ltd
- Destination Jungle
- Humanitarian Care Uganda
- Impact Associates
- Ndere Centre
- Park Alexander
- Pride Microfinance Ltd
- Primate Watch Safaris Ltd
- Rwenzori Bottling Co.Ltd
- Rwenzori Mountaineering Services
- Ssezibwa Falls Resort
- Tour Guide Publications
- Travel Hemispheres, LTD
- Uganda Breweries Ltd
- Uganda Travel & Hotels Guide
- Uganda Wildlife Authority
- Venture Uganda Limited
- Wash & Wills Country Home Ltd

Working Groups

- Birdlife Uganda
- Plants Working Group
- Herps Working Group
- Mammals Conservation Group
- Friends of Dudus
- Microbial Resources Group

Upcountry Branches

- Eastern Uganda based at Islamic University in Uganda
- Western Uganda based at Mbarara University of Science and Technology
- Northern Uganda based at Gulu University

ABC Membership



The African Bird Club has a local membership scheme at NatureUganda. Members based in Uganda and new members can register or renew based on the local registration fee of UGX 20,000.

Editor

- Sarah Nambweere

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