



## MEETING PROCEEDINGS

### THIRD QEPA LION ALLIANCE MEETING SUMMARY REPORT

APRIL 25<sup>TH</sup> 2019

VENUE: UGANDA WILDLIFE AUTHORITY CONFERENCE ROOM, MWEYA, KASESE DISTRICT, UGANDA

*Organized by Uganda Wildlife Authority in partnership with Wildlife Conservation Society*

By Helen Mwiza

## INTRODUCTION

This report summarises proceedings of the third Lion Alliance for Queen Elizabeth Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2019 at Uganda Wildlife Authority Conference Room. The meeting aimed at achieving the following: 1) sharing experience of partnership building and collaborations with respect to the mitigation of lion-human conflicts and addressing the lion conservation challenges in QENP in general; 2) to give an opportunity to Alex Braczkowski, a PhD student at the University of Australia who conducted a lion census in QENP to share his results, and 3), update the alliance about the fundraising progress and the need to agree on the mechanisms for managing private sector funding support, particularly from the eco-lodges.

Prior to the third meeting, two lion alliance meetings had been conducted on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at Kasenyi Safari Lodge and 5<sup>th</sup> October 2019 at Volcanoes Eco-Lodge, Kyambura with the aim of developing a collaborative strategy and generating consensus on priority actions based on the feedback from the working group that was selected to steer the process of identifying priority actions and responsibilities respectively. This meeting was held in furtherance of the alliance goal and set objectives.

## MEMBERS OF THE LION ALLIANCE FOR QENP

The following stakeholders have so far formally consented and designated focal point persons to represent the respective institutions on the Lion Alliance and attended the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

1. Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA),
2. Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS),
3. WildAid East Africa
4. Wide World Fund for Nature (WWF)
5. Uganda Large Predator Project,
6. Uganda Carnivore program
7. Little elephant,
8. Enjojo lodge,
9. Volcanoes Safari Lodge,
10. Kasenyi Safari Camp,
11. Wild Frontiers Uganda
12. Volcanoes Eco Lodge
13. Marafiki Safari Lodge
14. Tanzania Lion Illumination Project
15. WF and In The Shadow of Chimpanzees

This meeting was organized by Uganda Wildlife Authority in collaboration with Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and with funding support from Jude Vale and Selz Family.

## GOAL:

To promote lion recovery and conservation through stakeholder collaboration in QEPA

## MEETING OBJECTIVES

During the previous meeting, it was recommended that a concept note be written to donors given that the Lion Recovery Fund and other donors had expressed interest in supporting the initiative. This approach was agreed

upon after members had generated consensus on priority actions based on the feedback from the working group that was selected to steer the process of identifying priority actions and responsibilities. The objectives of this meeting were:

- I. To share Research and monitoring experiences of partnership and lion conservation challenges
- II. Share the Lion census results by Alex Brackowski, a PhD student of University of Queensland, Australia.
- III. Update the Alliance on the fundraising progress and sharing priority interventions for Oakland Zoo funds.
- IV. Agreeing on the mechanism for managing private sector funding support (e.g. eco- lodge owners)

## PROCEEDINGS

### Remarks by Commissioner for wildlife

In his remarks, Mr Edward Asalu, the Chief Park Warden, Queen Elizabeth Conservation Area, Uganda Wildlife Authority, thanked WCS for their role of initiating the Lion Alliance and supporting biodiversity conserving in Uganda. He noted that wildlife crime affects all of us considering the nature of our work and business that each member is involved with, adding that it also has implications on our livelihood, the community and the nation as a whole.

Edward indicated that the Government is committed to combating wildlife crime and recently submitted the guidelines to Cabinet seeking to prohibit livestock grazing inside the park. Edward clarified that though the law was already in place, the fishing enclaves are under the management of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries as well as the local governments. Edward added that once the guidelines are endorsed by cabinet and commissioned by the Minister of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, a management plan will be drafted for implementation. Edward reiterated that removing livestock from the fishing villages located inside the national park is political suicide as explained by the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities in earlier interactions. Edward noted that UWA is enforcing the law, citing a recent incident where three people residing near the fishing communities in Hamukungu village were arrested for grazing their livestock in the park and made to pay hefty fines.

He underscored the need for more satellite collars for research and monitoring purposes, undertake preventive actions instead of reactive ones and capacity building for rangers, particularly how to deal with hostile communities when lions get into communities and devour their livestock or kill a community member. He pledged UWA's support to the Lion Alliance work.

## PRESENTATIONS AND FEEDBACK FROM MEMBERS

To set the pace for discussion, three key presentations were made:

First, was a recoup of the lion alliance meeting proposals and resolutions presented by Simon Nampindo, the Country Director, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). This presentation gave a historical range of records of lions and leopards in 1950s, threats to Carnivore conservation and a recap of the purpose, objectives and resolutions of the two previous lion alliance meetings held May 5<sup>th</sup> 2018 and October 5<sup>th</sup> 2018 respectively. Simon also updated the alliance members about the fundraising progress, highlighting the activity budget for implementing a comprehensive carnivore-human conflict mitigation plan based

on the identified priorities by the members. The budget estimate is US\$1,791,075. Simon also shared the commitment by the Oakland Zoo managed by the Conservation Society of California (CSC) to raise and donate US\$25,000 to QENP lion conservation activities. Simon also noted that Resolve partnership with Savannah Tracking received a grant worth US\$40,000 from NatGeo to support the implementation of the lion-human conflict mitigation measures. The Eco-lodge owners are equally willing to provide funding and logistical support to this work. In his presentation, Simon also introduced the new members (e.g. WWF UCO, Marafiki safari, WildAid) who joined the alliance and shared the proposed mechanism for managing the funds from private sector such as designing a performance-based payment system to service providers and communities to deliver high impact conservation and social projects or channel the funds through the Uganda Biodiversity Trust

Fund that was established to finance conservation work in Uganda. Simon noted that some private sector companies have exhibited overhead aversion, in which case, UBF with lean staff and low overhead costs as well as income tax exempted could help lessen the tax burden as well as the overhead costs and ensure efficient use of the funds raised for this purpose.

Second presentation titled “Conserving Carnivores in QEPA” was delivered by Dr Siefert Ludwig, a wildlife veterinarian and Team Leader of the Uganda Carnivore Program. His presentation underscored the importance of leadership, citing election cycles, petrifying cultures, taboos and the relevance as the drivers of political, traditional, religious and professional leaders. Regarding resource management, Siefert emphasized the importance of engaging all people, including Local council one (LC1) leadership. Siefert also noted that culture should be adaptable as the media educates the public about why wildlife is wild and explaining why humans must adjust to wildlife not the other way round. Siefert said “remote sensing, verification and interventions are not a technical silver bullet and advised that communities clear thickets around their areas as one of the mitigation measures.” Siefert noted the importance of having manageable family sizes, education of the communities and advocated for having the next meeting with the affected local communities in QEPA for the alliance members to appreciate full complexity of the issues we are trying to address.

“Findings of a lion census in QEPA” by Alexander Brackowski, a doctorate researcher at the school of Earth and Environmental Science, University of Queensland. In his presentation, Alex gave a brief background of the study, highlighting the reasons why lions in QEPA are constantly moving long distances, their mating patterns, pride size and dynamics, sex ratio as well as their age structure. He expressed concern over the inbreeding risks due to shrinking pride sizes and a low male to female sex ratio estimated at 1:1.76, way below the normal average of 1:2. Alex noted that lion movement to DR. Congo, adding that the low presence of resident individuals coupled with insecurity presents a huge risk to the QEPA lion population. Alex estimated the lion population for QEPA to be 100 individuals. Alex, however, noted that there is need for regular surveys since a lot happened since he completed the survey in 2017. Alex is yet to complete his write up and will share with the park management and the lion alliance the final report of his study.

#### Ideas and Key Issues from the discussion

The presentations were followed by a spirited discussion moderated by Dr. Simon T Nampindo, the Country Director, Wildlife Conservation Society. Below are some of the key issues that emerged from the presentations:

Members proposed that the Ministry of Agriculture, animal industry and fisheries and local government expedite the amendment of the regulation prohibiting locals from grazing their livestock in the park so that UWA is empowered to do their work especially in the fishing enclaves due to jurisdictional issues; the enclaves are under the ministry of Agriculture, animal industry and fisheries.

1. UWA pledged to continue apprehending persons found grazing in the park as a mitigation measure until the law is finalized.
2. Regarding a proposal to flashing out the fishing villages and livestock from park land as a mitigation measure, members were informed that the move is political suicide and therefore not an option as a state measure
3. Concern was raised about the community’s hostility towards UWA. A recent incident was cited in which a leopard strayed into the community and killed a child which caused the community to turn on UWA rangers. It was explained that the community cornered and agitated the leopard which run into a house where the children were.
4. This raised the need to educate the communities about animal behavior. When lion stray into the community or break into a kraal, community members often gather in large numbers, make noise and rangers find it difficult to manage the large gathering. The leopard incident in Kasenyi fishing village which resulted into the death of child was cited as an example of poor crowd management and a parent leaving her children unattended in the house to go see the leopard. In this case, the leopard run from the crowd and into house out of stress and agitation and killed the baby.
5. Communities must be educated about the importance of having manageable families to reduce the rate of population growth around the park area particularly the fishing communities to avoid further encroachment on park land.

6. The fishing community have to be sensitized about the importance of wildlife conservation particularly lion preservation given the revenue generated from these carnivores to supplement their income.
7. Local leaders and the communities should be helped or advised on the best and sustainable ventures to engage in once they receive their portion of the revenue shared by the tourism industry to avoid wastage of resources and non-profitable ventures. A case in which local leaders in Ishasha bought and distributed sick goats to locals was cited as an example. Corruption was mentioned as the reason for this gaffe.
8. Strengthen community livelihood. The communities should be shown that there are other income generating activities such as arts and craft for tourists coming into the area other than focusing on fishing and agriculture as their only and main source of livelihood which depletes resources
9. QEPA should be de-snared following a recent incident in which a lion's paw was cut off by a snare.
10. Satellite collars, other research and monitoring mechanisms are not a silver bullet for carnivore preservation, other mitigation measures must be sought and employed too.
11. Strategies for lion and prey base recovery should be developed and employed quickly particularly now that prey animals are rapidly declining and to discourage lions from straying into communities for easy prey which is livestock. Members reasoned that lions opt for livestock with high body mass index instead of kobs or other prey animals that require use of high energy to capture.
12. The Lions and communities in QEPA are both currently under stress yet there are no available intervention measures or mechanisms to deal with the aftermath of the human- lion conflict, particularly for people who are still dealing with Post Trauma Stress Disorder (PTSD) or anxiety. Members urged UWA and local government health workers to come up with some form of psychological treatment for victims to reduce hostility and retaliation towards lions.
13. Though fire is used as a management tool by UWA, members noted that its impacts on habitat and its redistribution destroys some key plant and animal species and therefore UWA should think and develop other habitat management mechanisms other than fire.
14. The use of chemicals especially among cotton growing farmers affects wildlife in the park and therefore should be discouraged by both local leaders and champions
15. A comprehensive study to understand wildlife and their dynamics should be prioritized for local leaders if the communities are to adjust to residing near the park
16. A communication strategy and data sharing mechanisms for the Lion Alliance should be developed so as to relay the alliance's messages to donors, the public and other stakeholders
17. The Implementation of mitigation measures for the human-wildlife conflict should be intensified by the alliance first engaging with the communities to fully appreciate their experiences
18. A lion survey should be conducted ahead of prey base recovery (current estimate is 100 as per the 2017 research study by Alex) to understand the quantity required in QEPA.
19. The next meeting should be held in the community to obtain first hand info of their experiences and measures they have been employing to deter lions and other wildlife from accessing their homesteads
20. The increased movement of lions was attributed to mating patterns, perturbation and old age
21. Regular surveys were recommended. Since the last lion census conducted by Alex, a lot has transpired in a short period of time and as such, the number of lions has declined following several incidents one of which is the discovery of a lion's collar in a river recently
22. Night surveys are also recommended. The open data model should be used every two years
23. Regarding fundraising initiatives, a budget estimate of \$1,791,075 over a period of three (3) years was shared.
24. On funding, Oakland zoo pledged to raise \$25,000 towards the support of good impactful lion conservation interventions while Resolve partnership with Savannah Tracking received a grant worth US\$40,000 from Nat Geo to support the implementation of the lion-human conflict mitigation measures.

25. Eco-lodge owners are equally willing to provide funding and logistical support to this work but an enabling mechanism for this should be devised.
26. Designing a performance-based payment system to service providers and communities to deliver high impact conservation and social projects or channel the funds through the Uganda Biodiversity Trust Fund that was established to finance conservation work in Uganda was proposed the mechanism for managing the funds from the private sector. It was explained that some private sector companies have exhibited overhead aversion, in which case, UBF which has lean staff, low overhead costs and is income tax exempted could help lessen the tax burden, overhead costs and ensure efficient use of the funds raised for this Eco lodge owners.
27. More information regarding funding and donors e.g. Wildlife Conservation Network/Lion Recovery Fund, Vulcan/Allen Paul Foundation for funds to conduct the lion census would be obtained and shared after the lion summit in May 2019 in the USA.
28. A proposal that UWA come up with a management strategy to avoid individual donors dictating terms was made.
29. It is important to understand NGO's dynamics as other lion recovery mechanisms continue to be explored.
30. Four New stakeholders: WWFUCO, Marafiki safari, WildAid joined the Lion Alliance
31. Members proposed that Uganda Conservation Foundation (UCF) be brought on board
32. Other key partners to engage in this endeavor were cited as:

#### **Government Institutions**

- a. The Central and local government for example the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, Uganda Tourism Board, Uganda Community Tourism Association and Association of Tour operators on favorable policies and other important issues.
- b. Ministry of Health to sensitise the masses on having manageable families
- c. Research and the Academia
- d. Stakeholders in the fisheries industry
- e. The Agriculture industry i.e. MAAIF on livestock management
- f. Development Partners i.e. European Union
- g. Data Bank for improved breeds of livestock

#### **Private Sector Financing Mechanism**

- a. Investor (Donors, private sector)
- b. Intermediary (WCS, UCF, WWF)
- c. Service providers (communities i.e. drama groups) outcome payers (UWA, WC, UCP)
- d. Target population (communities) and evaluators/validation (WCS, UCP, private companies)
33. The success of the Lion Alliance was underscored as hinging on joint efforts/collaboration particularly on changing perception, attitude and practices
34. Poachers reform initiatives should be introduced as potential mitigation measures
35. Zoning, respect for boundaries, land uses for enclave's/ wildlife sanctuaries should be revisited and discussed for improved measures
36. The research using ICT should be employed for better monitoring, reporting and early warning /preventive measures
37. Some wildlife such as crocodiles should be translocated as they are common outside protected e.g. crocodiles in Nakasongora.
38. Poaching, Wildlife trade and trafficking of all wildlife in QEPAs should be addressed
39. Better planning of land use in problem areas vis a vis compatible land use
40. Popularizing ICT and human-wildlife conflict (HWC) mitigation are a priority
41. Feedback platforms at least bi-annually are essential for the Alliance
42. Community collaborative arrangements work in combination with other methods e.g. buffer and repellent methods-value chain development i.e. marketing the products of any enterprise started by communities to

consider effectiveness, cost, human and social acceptability

43. Incorporate HWC in general park management activities across all departments to promote positive community attitudes as a precursor for effective conservations should be considered
44. The media should be engaged to create awareness and educate the communities in QEPA and the general public

#### WAY FORWARD

The following actions were agreed upon for implementation:

1. Disseminate the lion census
2. Engage community more – next meeting should be with the community
3. Prey base is low, there is need for lion population and prey base recovery
4. Approach safari/tour companies to help raise funds for lion recovery
5. More understanding or raising flags about the sex ratio, population of stronghold lions in conservation areas
6. Proactive engagement of local government
7. Identify the right leadership within government structures to prioritize wildlife conservation for national budget allocation
8. Provide technical guidance to the government on how to structure the compensation scheme
9. Outcome based payments for the revenue sharing funds
10. Can we use the regular district security meetings to engage the local government Leadership- Edwards to advise?
11. Identify community champions
12. Forth Meeting to be conducted in July 2019 at Marafiki safari eco-lodge and the specific date will be communicated.

-----End-----

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Uganda Wildlife Authority would like to thank Wildlife Conservation Society for the tremendous effort invested in combating wildlife crime in Uganda and funding support rendered to this meeting. UWA also thanks Dr. Siefert Ludwig for his technical advice, Alexander Brackowski for sharing his PhD research findings on Lions in QEPA and Wide World Fund for Nature for sharing their experiences. Special thanks to all the Lion Alliance members listed below for their commitment to the noble cause of lion recovery in QEPA.

- Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA),
- Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS),
- WildAid East Africa
- Wide World Fund for Nature (WWF)
- Uganda Large Predator Project,
- Uganda Carnivore program
- Little elephant,
- Enjojo lodge,
- Volcanoes Safari Lodge,
- Kasenyi Safari Camp,
- Wild Frontiers Uganda

- Volcanoes EcoLodge
- Marafiki Safari Lodge
- Tanzania Lion Illumination Project
- WF and In The Shadow of Chimpanzee

**Jude Vale Logo**

*ABOUT THE FUNDER*

This third lion alliance meeting was made possible with generous funding support from Jude Vale. However, the views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the US Government.