



**UWA**

*Conserving  
for Generations*

## Lion Update Uganda

*3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2023*

# UWA Lions Conservation - Status



- Kidepo Valley Protected Area. Severe collapse in lion numbers.
- Queen Elizabeth Protected Area. Vulnerable lion population 70 – 100 individuals. A recovery is expected due to the Recovery of QE programme. Lions have moved into Virunga NP, DRC due to improved security in DRC.
- Murchison Falls Protected Area. Strong recovery is underway due to the Recovery of Murchison Falls Programme.

## Catalyse a lion recovery across existing Protected Areas (Queen Elizabeth, Murchison Falls & Kidepo)

### Guiding principals:

- Expand long-term protected area management & lion conservation from 5% to over 80% of the protected areas
- Drive prey species recoveries in numbers and distribution
- Minimise lion mortality



# UWA Lions Conservation - Highlights



- Provision of permanent 24/7 teams to monitor lions, integration of tracking and monitoring systems, via EarthRanger, to prevent poaching, HWC and poisoning
- Upgrade of law enforcement to target lion protection and mitigation of threats, including upgrade of law enforcement, vet response and problem animal control teams
- Aerial surveys showed considerable recovery in prey species numbers & distribution in Murchison Falls, and on-going poaching and invasive species management species management in Queen Elizabeth NP
- Set up of UWA recognition files for UWA to manage
- Partners carry out Lion survey across the national parks (Dr Alex Braczowski & Dr Tutilo Mudumba, WCS, UCF)
- Habitat improvement in QEPA to encourage lions into core sectors away from high risk areas

Activities completed by UCF include: Establishment of Joint Operations Command Centres (x3), construction of 24 ranger posts and 8 marine ranger stations in strategic landscapes, vet / law enforcement / problem animal control quick reaction forces, direct upgrade of ranger professionalism with over 1000 rangers completing junior leadership courses, provision of quick reaction force vehicles, boats and motorbikes – and lion monitoring vehicles, digital radio / phone and community communications channels, all integrated into the EarthRanger operating system. Equipping of rangers, and provision of operational support by UCF through COVID (food, fuel, vet bills, vehicle maintenance).

# UWA Monitoring of Lions:



## 1. Systems:

- Sat Collaring: Real time management on the UWA EarthRanger system resulted in over 20 lion HWC rescues in QE. Teams provided with receivers and EarthRanger Mobile to support field monitoring and responses
- System enables UWA and partners to contribute to information gathering and use by management
- System ensures UWA owns and provides information rights for interested parties
- Lions outside of parks registered on Conservation Area systems
- SMART based on Ranger observations during patrols

## 2. Teams

- Vehicles, teams providing 24/7 lion response unit and support, including protection of lion and prey in snare and hotpot areas
- 20 community scouts, a vehicle and driver deployed for 4 years on the Delta in MFs providing UWA with additional resources to support UWA anti-poaching and snare removal (over 40,000 snares removed during the period)
- Provision of Marine Ranger Unit patrol boats, training and operational budgets
- Recruitment and support of a young Ugandan generation to conserve for future generations

# Lion Poisoning & Habitat Improvement



## Lion poisoning

- Wildlife poison management training (3 courses in each QE, MFs and KV) by Andre Botha, EWT
- UWA Wildlife Poison Management Policy under development
- Poisoning incidents all responded to and in each of the four cases, intelligence & investigation teams resourced resulting in the poachers being arrested
- Law enforcement (operations, intelligence, investigations and prosecutions) supported to counter lion poaching and poisoning, all four poisoning incidents resulted in arrests



## Habitat Improvement:

- Recovery of key waterholes and clearing of invasive species in core resource areas to hold lions in well protected, low risk regions
- On-going clearing of invasive species to improve prey species distribution and numbers

