



Uganda

PRESERVING THE BIODIVERSITY OF TROPICAL RAINFOREST

The tropical rainforests and savannas of Uganda are a biodiversity hotspot, and a buffer to climate change. The aim of IUCN NL is to protect vital biodiversity. We help local communities restore forest and wetlands, and lobby against oil development.

IUCN NL is active in two vital landscapes in the Albertine Rift in Western Uganda: the Murchison landscape and the Queen Elizabeth landscape. As well as chimpanzees, baboons and dozens of endemic bird species, these habitats are also home to giraffes and elephants. The forests protect the local residents against flood risk, as well as mitigating climate change by capturing carbon.

HALTING OIL PRODUCTION

The planned oil operations in the Murchison National Park will be disastrous for the landscape and is already resulting in the loss of biodiversity as a result of deforestation, pollution, disturbance and the construction of infrastructure including roads and an airport. Oil extraction requires high water consumption levels, and also attracts thousands of migrant workers. IUCN NL is collaborating with the Netherlands Commission for Environmental Assessment (NCEA) to increase awareness of the potential negative consequences, and we are strengthening the lobbying capacity of both national and local stakeholders. Together with our partners, we have issued critical feedback on the shortcomings of the environmental assessment report prepared by the oil company Total.

In addition, there are plans to construct a 1445 kilometre-long underground oil pipeline from West Uganda to Tanzania. Heating the pipeline in order to allow the viscous crude oil to flow requires a great deal of energy. We are organising an international campaign and are supporting local NGOs in their efforts to halt the pipeline project. We also support them in interpreting and responding to environmental assessment reports.

PRESSURE ON NATURE FROM AGRICULTURE

Over the past ten years, the population of Uganda has grown by one third, to 40 million. This rapid population growth has increased pressure on the available land and nature. Much food is necessary to feed so many mouths. Sugar cane plantations for export are expanding rapidly. Over the last decades, these activities have resulted in a high deforestation rate, between 10 and 15 annually, also affecting the forest reserves.

“Our partners in Uganda play a crucial role in conserving biodiversity. They are able to encourage local and national parties to take essential steps towards sustainability.”

Henk Simons, expert on Uganda at IUCN NL

Example of our work

Nature restoration to improve livelihood

Local partners of IUCN NL are working to restore forests and wetlands, and to promote sustainable agriculture, to protect the natural environment and to maintain the livelihoods of local people. We commissioned a study on current practices in sugar cane production, with recommendations for steps that could result in more sustainable practices. This report helps our partner Ecotrust support local communities to maintain a healthy livelihood through forest restoration and sustainable land use. Ecotrust provided support in the development of tree nurseries and generates income through carbon trading. IUCN NL supports the development of a catchment area plan for sustainable water management, with clear recommendations for forest and wetland restoration.

Groups of farmers are responsible for monitoring the agreements reached. Kinyara, the country's largest sugar cane producer, is now contributing to ecosystem restoration. The flywheel for the project is provided by local banks that for the first time are issuing loans to consortia of farmers because they are sufficiently confident in these projects, to risk investing. To ensure the sustainability of all these efforts, the rights of local communities to manage their own woodland had to be enshrined in law. The lobbying efforts of our partners have made this possible.

Example of our work

Corridor for preserving biodiversity

In the Murchison landscape, we are working to establish and restore a wildlife corridor. This corridor, that links the Bugoma and Budongo forest reserves, is of vital importance for the long-term survival of the chimpanzee and other primates. We started a baseline assessment of the corridor, before mapping the possibilities and costs for establishing key links. We then appealed to the willingness of dozens of land owners to sell or lease part of their property. These efforts have already resulted in a three-year investment for the purchase and restoration of parts of the corridor. Over the coming years we plan to continue our efforts to establish this essential corridor.

COLLABORATING WITH IUCN NL

Over the coming years, we plan to help local NGOs to protect and ensure the sustainable use of nature in Uganda.



Reforestation by ECOTRUST in Uganda

Do you want to help IUCN NL continue with these support activities? Visit our [website](#) for detailed information and more example projects or contact our expert [Henk Simons](#).