

ECOLOGICAL CALL

"Sustainability a Must"



Newsletter: Issue4: Oct-Dec, 2025



Featured Highlights

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2. Empowering wildlife rangers
3. Enhancing Conservation of the Shoebill
4. Seasonal Greetings

Message from the Director Programs



Dear colleagues,

I am pleased to share our progress towards achieving our mission of securing solutions to biodiversity and development challenges.

The biggest highlight of this quarter was the YouthIt or Loselt Regional Conference. We hosted the conference at Miika Eco-Resort, Hoima District with support and partnership from Tropenbos International (TBI) with youths from Uganda, Ghana, Ethiopia and DR Congo.

The mission of the initiative is to capitalize on the demographic advantage of youths being the biggest proportion to lead transformation of their landscapes through building skills, amplifying voices and driving policy advocacy thus creating sustainable livelihoods, restoring ecosystems, and championing inclusive change. Read through the newsletter for details and many more stories.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard Ssemmanda".

Richard Ssemmanda

Director Programs



YOUTH IT OR LOSE

Regional Conference, Uganda



Youth It or Lose It, Africa

Youths form the biggest proportion across Africa and have many commonalities shared across e.g cultural values and practices many of them inclined to conservation of environment such as totems among many cultures.

There is an increased awareness and involvement in conservation by many youths across the world. Additionally, youths are faced with common problems such as intergenerational stereotypes, discrimination, limited access to funding, education, political instability, bureaucracy and gender blind approaches.

After the realization of these commonalities within similar landscapes, the youths in Africa came together between 12-19th October, 2025 at the Miika Resort in Hoima under a YouthIt or Loselt Africa Initiative. We hosted youths from Ghana, Ethiopia, Congo and Uganda.

The initiative aims to empower Africa's youths to lead restoration of people and nature through advocacy, leadership and collaboration, building vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable communities for generations to come.

Pillars

- Bridging generations:** Fostering intergenerational dialogue between youth and elders to revitalize traditional knowledge and strengthen cultural identity.
- Capacity Development:** Providing tailored learning tracks to enhance youth agency and action-readiness.
- Youth-led Action:** Funding and on territorial management, biodiversity conservation, climate, cultural preservation, and local economies, positioning youth as designers and implementers of change.
- Communities of Practice:** Establishing regional learning hubs and peer networks to amplify collective impact, foster innovation, and scale solidarity-based youth engagement.

Why Does it Matter?

Youth participation fosters inclusive governance through fostering ownership and responsibility for the environment. It enables knowledge exchange across generations and it challenges stereotypes about their roles in decision-making.

Either YouthIt or LoselIt!!!





ETA staff, Derrick demonstrates to a ranger how to use the camera trap

2.0

Empowering wildlife rangers with modern technology for effective Rhino Conservation in Uganda.

Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary was established in 2005 to reintroduce the White Rhinos in Uganda which had been hunted to extinction in the early 1980s. It was started in 2006 with 6 Rhinos and the population has since grown to be a home 46 Rhinos and many other wildlife. With the number of Rhinos growing to a viable population, it has presented a need to translocate them back into the wild particularly starting with Ajai Wildlife Reserve where the Black Rhino once existed.

The reserve is vast and the challenges that led to their extinction may still exist and wildlife rangers being the frontline defenders of wildlife play an important role in their protection.

Ecological Trends Alliance together with Regenerative Safari Venture and Bingo Environmental Foundation empowered rangers with modern tools and knowledge to face evolving challenges of wildlife conservation thus ensuring safety and success of Rhino populations in the wild.



A training on the application of GPS, Camera Traps and Drones for wildlife research, monitoring and conservation was conducted within Ziwa Rhino and Wildlife Sanctuary for rangers.

This was conducted from 5th to 9th October 2025. Participants from different departments including research and monitoring, tourism, crime investigations, law enforcement and general management at the Ziwa Rhino and Wildlife Sanctuary were trained.

They were equipped with knowledge on how to operate and use modern tools such as drones, camera traps and GPS. The participants were exposed to both theoretical and practical sessions to build bases for reporting and have hands on experiences to operate the tools.



They were trained in data analysis and interpretation of the findings, and making meaningful conclusions thus contributing to conservation.

Although the participants were empowered and attained new skills, there is need to equip the sanctuary with such tools for effective practice and application especially during research and monitoring thus contributing to conservation of the Rhinos, which is Critically Endangered .



Enhancing Conservation of the Shoebill in Uganda through studying dispersal and Movements.

The Shoebill is a globally threatened species on the International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List and Endangered on the National Red List for Uganda. With an estimated population of 3300-5300 mature individuals, the Shoebill continues to decline across its range.

It inhabits fresh water wetlands in Afrotropical Africa spanning from South Sudan to Zambia.

In Uganda, the population is estimated between 300-600 individuals spread across 12 of the 34 Important Bird Areas and Mabamba wetland is one of the core breeding areas and a popular place for ecotourism.

The wetland is key to the livelihoods of the surrounding local communities through ecotourism, fishing, sand mining and many other activities.

Estimated Shoebill



Global

3300-5300

Mature individuals

Uganda

300 - 600

Individuals spread across

The Shoebill is faced with a number of threats that are leading to its decline across its range mostly resulting from human disturbance such as; hunting, nest disturbance, burning and illegal wildlife trade.

The International Single Species' Action Plan for the Shoebill whose goal is to increase the population of the species and reduce mortality identified numerous gaps to the conservation of the Shoebill.

Among the gaps is the breeding ecology, movements of the Shoebill, shoebill-human interactions, threats and population trends.

With support from Rufford Foundation (Grant), Swiss Ornithological Institute, Worthwild Africa and Renato. We tagged 1 Shoebill and will be monitoring its dispersal and movements.

The project aims at filling some of the gaps pointed out in the International Single Species' Action plan for the Shoebill through studying the dispersal of young, movements and nesting requirements for the Shoebill.



Seasonal Greetings

As the year ends, we celebrate the progress made in advancing conservation, empowering communities, and promoting evidence-based Solutions for sustainable development.
We are grateful for the collaboration and partnership.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND
A HAPPY NEW YEAR.**



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Thank you for your support and interest in our work.

Together, we can make a difference for our
planet and its people.

