

UGANDA'S GIRAFFE Conservation Guide

Thank you to Cindy Armstrong, Tom Mustill (AGB & Gripping Films), Pretty Fly Photography and Sean Viljoen for providing the images and map.

Taxonomy & Populations

Class: Mammalia (Mammals)

Order: Artiodactyla

Family: Giraffidae

Genus, Species and Subspecies:

Giraffa camelopardalis

G. c. antiquorum
G. c. camelopardalis
G. c. peralta

Giraffa giraffa

G. g. angolensis
G. g. giraffa

Giraffa reticulata

Giraffa tippelskirchi

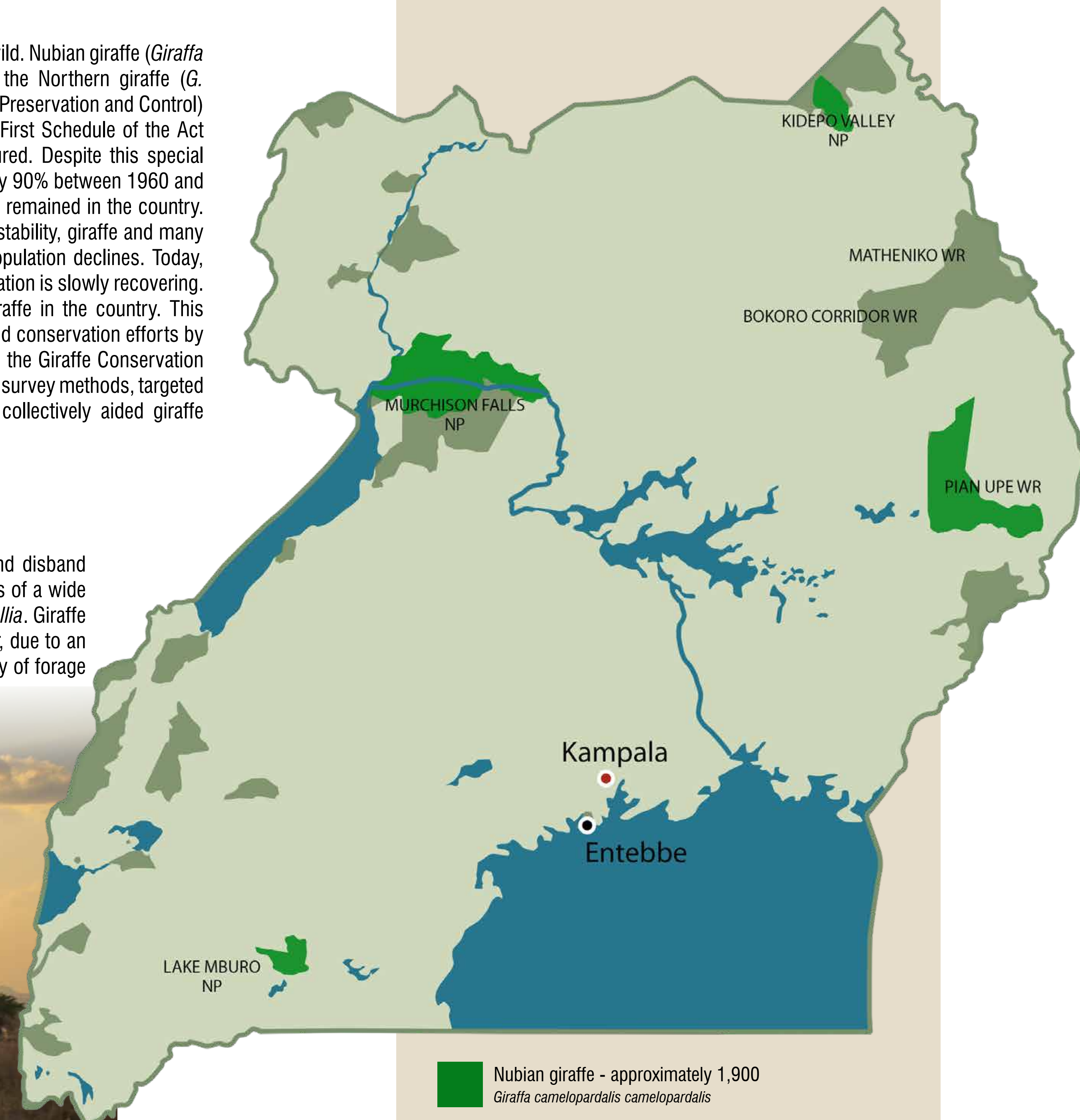
G. t. thornicrofti
G. t. tippelskirchi

Where do you find giraffe in Uganda?

Today, as a direct result of strategic conservation interventions by the Uganda Wildlife Authority in collaboration with GCF and other partners, there are five distinct Nubian giraffe populations in Uganda. Conservation translocations have played an important role in increasing giraffe numbers and populations in the country. Successful conservation translocations have supported the establishment of new giraffe populations in the Lake Mburo National Park (15 giraffe were moved from the Murchison Falls National Park in 2015), on the southern side of the Nile River in the Murchison Falls National Park (37 giraffe were moved from the northern section in 2016 and 2017), and in the Pian Upe Wildlife Reserve (30 giraffe were moved from the Murchison Falls National Park in 2019 and 2020). Additionally, the small giraffe population in the Kidepo Valley National Park was augmented with 14 additional giraffe from the Murchison Falls National Park in 2018. The Murchison Falls National Park continues to boast a healthy giraffe population (> 1,800) and is home to approximately 50% of Africa's Nubian giraffe. Furthermore, giraffe numbers in the Lake Mburo and Kidepo Valley National Parks have more than doubled in recent years.

Giraffe in Uganda

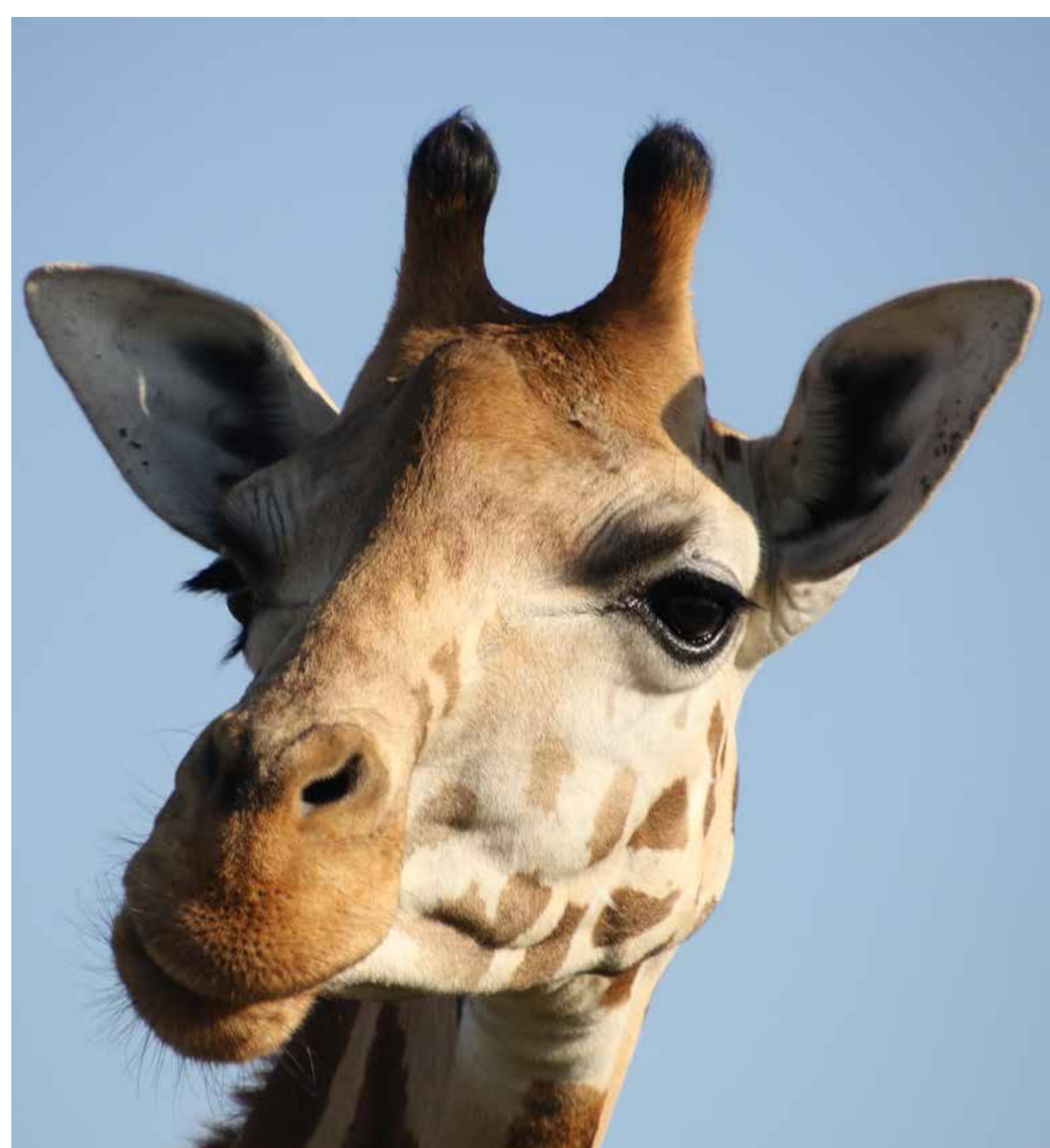
Uganda is home to over 50% of all Nubian giraffe in the wild. Nubian giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis camelopardalis*) are a subspecies of the Northern giraffe (*G. camelopardalis*). Giraffe are protected under the Game (Preservation and Control) Act of 1959 (Chapter 198) and listed in Part A of the First Schedule of the Act as animals which may not be legally hunted or captured. Despite this special protection, giraffe numbers plummeted by approximately 90% between 1960 and the 1990s, and by the late 1990s only two populations remained in the country. In a country that was troubled by political and social instability, giraffe and many other wild animal species experienced considerable population declines. Today, Uganda is politically stable, and the Nubian giraffe population is slowly recovering. The current estimate stands at over 1,900 Nubian giraffe in the country. This conservation success can be accredited to the continued conservation efforts by the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) with support from the Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF) and other partners. New and improved survey methods, targeted monitoring and dedicated conservation actions have collectively aided giraffe populations to expand in Uganda.



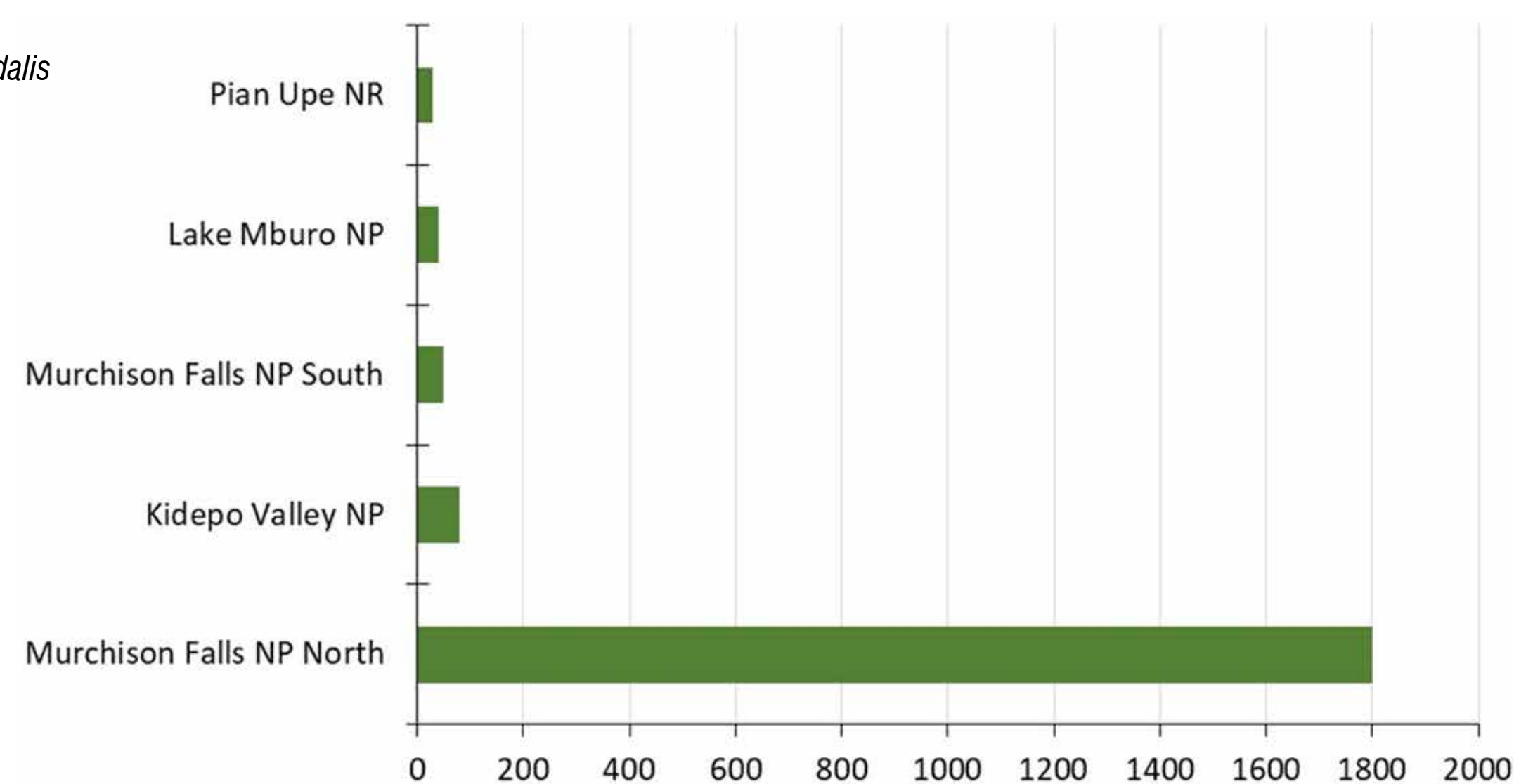
Nubian giraffe - approximately 1,900
Giraffa camelopardalis camelopardalis

Habitat and ecology

Giraffe live in fission-fusion systems, which means that individuals and herds merge and disband frequently. As browsers, giraffe feed predominantly on the leaves, flowers, fruits and twigs of a wide range of tree species including *Combretum*, *Commiphora*, *Senegalia*, *Terminalia* and *Vachellia*. Giraffe will often shift their home ranges seasonally in search of new forage and mates. However, due to an increase in the human population, these movements are often restricted and the availability of forage is reduced.



Nubian giraffe *G. c. camelopardalis*



Local history of giraffe

In the last century, giraffe were widespread both within and outside protected areas in northern and eastern Uganda. It is likely that they also occurred throughout the southern ranges historically but were extirpated (*locally extinct*) in these ranges more than a century ago. By the 1960s, however, the giraffe population had been reduced to <1,800 individuals, which were confined primarily to five protected areas: the Bokoro Corridor Wildlife Reserve, Matheniko Wildlife Reserve, Pian-Upe Wildlife Reserve, Murchison Falls National Park, and the Kidepo Valley National Park. Illegal hunting as well as increased agricultural land use due to a burgeoning human population further decimated giraffe numbers. By the mid-1990s, giraffe survived in only two locations in the country: the Kidepo Valley National Park and the northern section of the Murchison Falls National Park. Giraffe were extirpated (*locally extinct*) in the Matheniko Wildlife Reserve (before 1983), the Pian Upe Wildlife Reserve (1995), and the Bokoro Corridor Wildlife Reserve (1996).

Threats

- **Illegal hunting /poaching and snaring** for bushmeat, pelts, tail hair, and medicine.
- **Large-scale infrastructure developments** such as oil and gas exploration, and the construction of a dam in the Murchison Falls National Park.
- **Diseases** such as Giraffe Skin Disease (GSD). Although GSD is observed in the Murchison Falls National Park, it is unlikely to become a major threat.
- **Anthropogenic factors** such as land-use change due to the increased agricultural activities of an increasing human population.
- **Habitat encroachment**, resulting from the increase in human population and livestock, leads to the loss and fragmentation of giraffe habitat and forage.



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The Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF) is dedicated to a sustainable future for all giraffe populations in the wild. GCF is the only NGO in the world that concentrates solely on the conservation and management of giraffe in the wild throughout Africa.

giraffeconservation.org

