



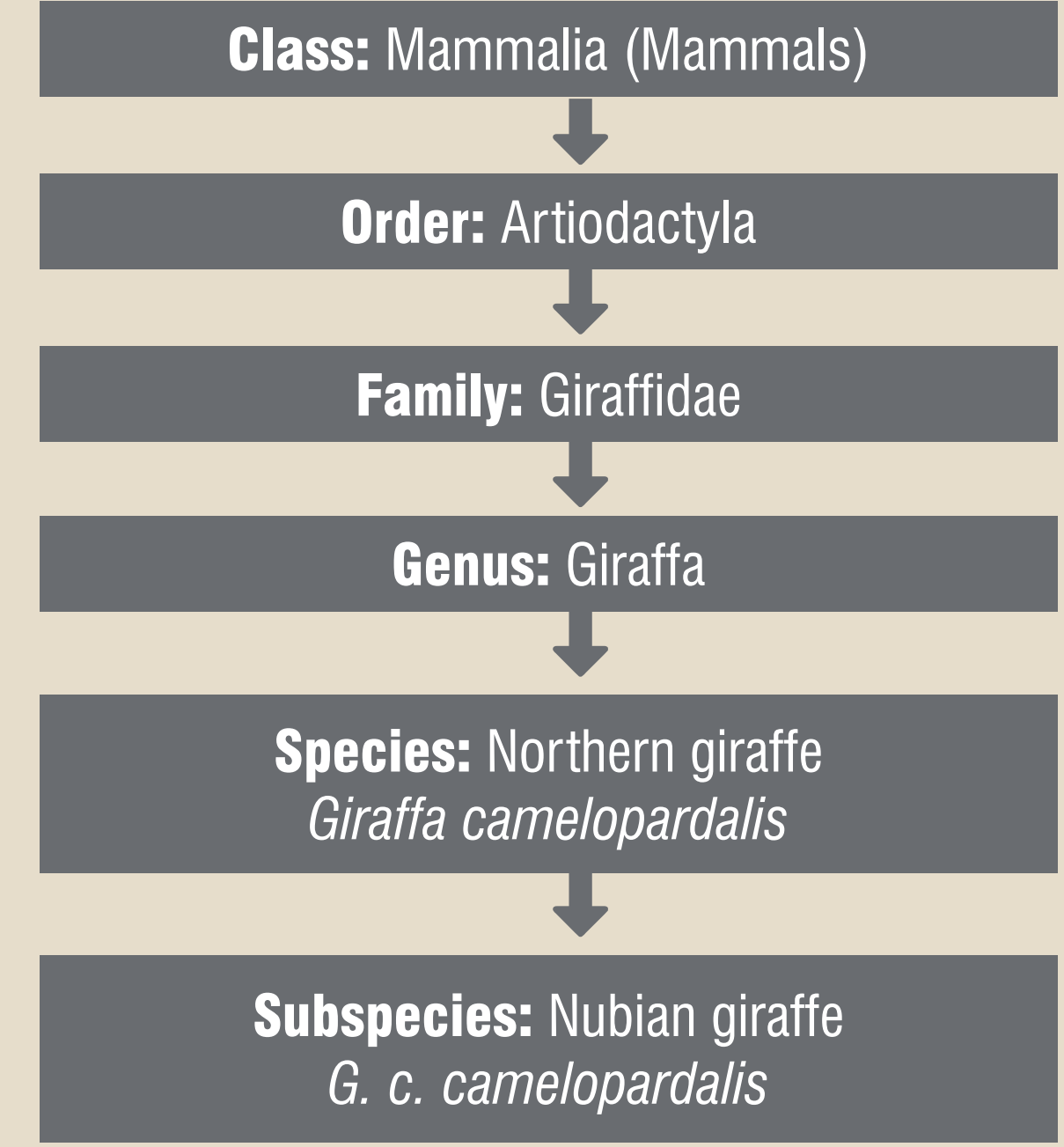
UGANDA'S GIRAFFE

Conservation Guide

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



Taxonomy & Populations



Where do you find giraffe in Uganda?

Today, due to strategic conservation interventions by the Uganda Wildlife Authority in collaboration with GCF and other partners, there are four distinct giraffe populations in Uganda. Conservation translocations are an important method for increasing giraffe population numbers. This is especially relevant for Uganda as they have undertaken translocations in an effort to restore giraffe populations to ensure continuous population increase trends.

Successful giraffe populations were established in Lake Mburo National Park (15 giraffe translocated from the Murchison Falls National Park), and on the southern side of the Nile River in the Murchison Falls National Park (18 and 19 giraffe translocated from the northern section in 2016 and 2017, respectively). Additionally, the small giraffe population in the Kidepo Valley National Park was augmented with 14 giraffe from the Murchison Falls National Park in 2018.

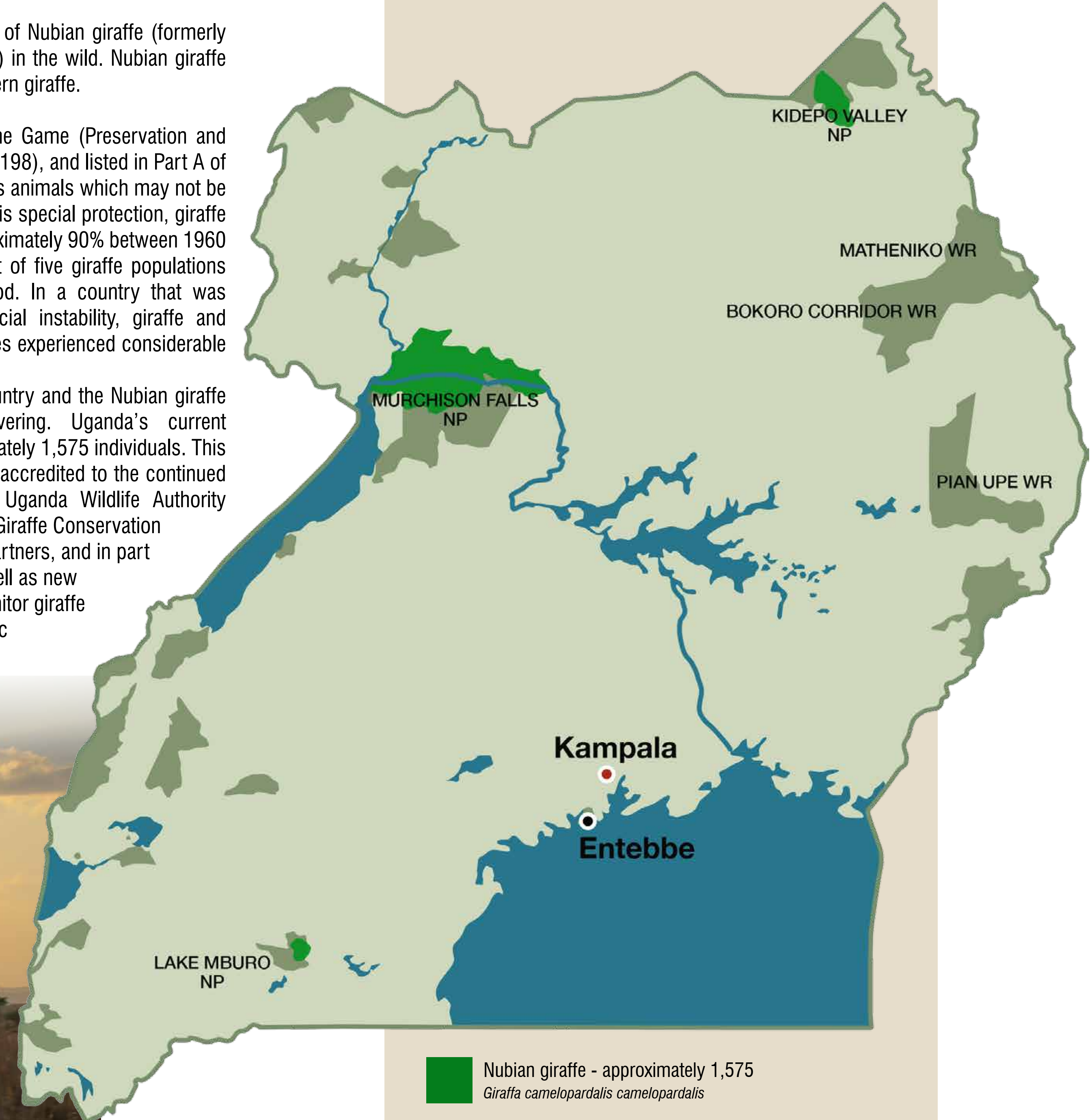
As a result, Murchison Falls National Park boasts a healthy giraffe population (approximately 1,450 north and 45 south of the River Nile), and is home to approximately 50% of Africa's Nubian giraffe. Populations in Lake Mburo National Park (24 individuals) and in the Kidepo Valley National Park (60 individuals) also report a steady increase in numbers.

Giraffe in Uganda

Uganda is home to over 50% of Nubian giraffe (formerly known as Rothschild's giraffe) in the wild. Nubian giraffe are a subspecies of the Northern giraffe.

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 hunted or captured. Despite this special protection, giraffe numbers plummeted by approximately 90% between 1960 and the 1990s, and three out of five giraffe populations disappeared during this period. 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 a stable country and the Nubian giraffe population is slowly recovering. Uganda's current estimate of giraffe is approximately 1,575 individuals. 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, and in part to more informative data as well as new and improved methods to monitor giraffe populations using photographic mark-recapture methodology.



Nubian giraffe - approximately 1,575
Giraffa camelopardalis camelopardalis



Habitat and ecology

Giraffe live in fission-fusion systems. This means that giraffe herds will either merge or disband frequently. Giraffe are browsers, and feed predominantly on the leaves, flowers, fruits and twigs of a wide range of tree species such as *Combretum*, *Commiphora*, *Vachellia*, and *Terminalia*. Additionally, giraffe may also shift their home ranges in search of forage and mates. However, due to increased human populations such movements are largely restricted, and forage availability has been reduced.



Local history of giraffe

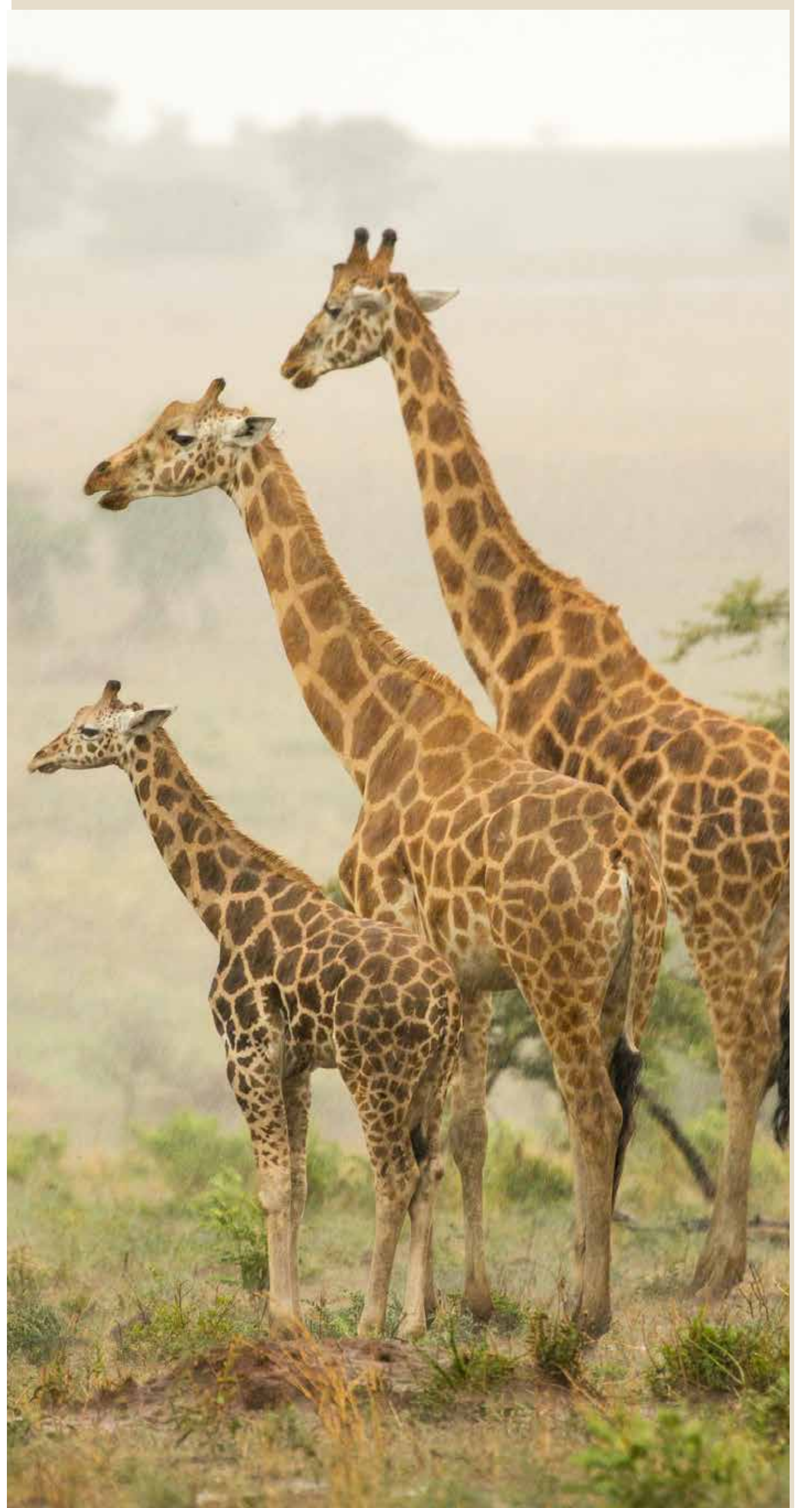
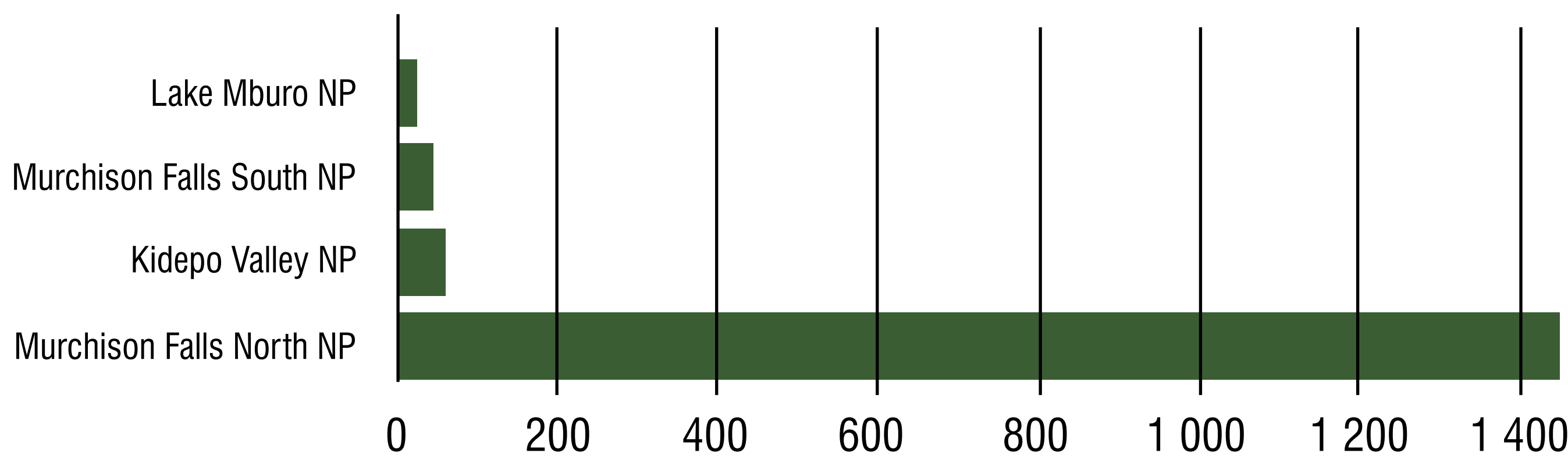
Historically, giraffe were widespread both within and outside protected areas in northern and eastern Uganda. By the 1960s, however, the giraffe population had been reduced to 1,800 individuals, and were confined primarily to five protected areas: Bokoro Corridor Wildlife Reserve, Matheniko Wildlife Reserve, Pian-Upe Wildlife Reserve, Murchison Falls National Park, and Kidepo Valley National Park.

Illegal hunting as well as increased agricultural land use due to an increasing human population further decimated giraffe populations. By the mid-1990s, giraffe survived in only two locations in the country: Kidepo Valley National Park, and the northern section of Murchison Falls National Park. Giraffe have been extirpated (*locally extinct*) in the Matheniko Wildlife Reserve (last giraffe sighting before 1983), the Pian-Upe Wildlife Reserve (last giraffe sighting in 1995), and the Bokoro Corridor Wildlife Reserve (last giraffe sighting in 1996).

Threats

- **Illegal hunting** snaring for bushmeat, giraffe pelts and tail hair, and medicine.
- **Habitat loss and fragmentation** giraffe are restricted to three national parks in Uganda and the imminent oil and gas exploration in the Murchison Falls National Park is a potential threat.
- **Diseases** However, Giraffe Skin Disease (GSD) as often observed in Uganda, is likely not a threat to giraffe.
- **Anthropogenic factors** land-use change due to increased agricultural activities as a result of increased human population.
- **Habitat encroachment** increasing human population leads to loss of giraffe habitat and forage.

Nubian giraffe *G. c. camelopardalis*



Copyright © Giraffe Conservation Foundation 2019



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

