



## Post-Translocation Survey Report Pian Upe Wildlife Reserve, Uganda 4 – 7 April 2023

### Background

Pian Upe Wildlife Reserve (WR), located in the Karamoja subregion of eastern Uganda, is the second largest protected area and the largest reserve in the country. Historically, Pian Upe WR supported one of Uganda's largest populations of the critically endangered Nubian giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis camelopardalis*). By the mid 1990s, however, regional instability and illegal hunting associated with political unrest led to their local extinction.

The Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF) and the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), together with partners supported a series of conservation translocations to re-establish this historically, ecologically, and culturally significant giraffe population. To date, these collaborative efforts have resulted in two giraffe translocations to Pian Upe WR: 14 were giraffe released in November 2019, and 15 giraffe in November 2021.

### Methods

GCF in collaboration with UWA, and with support from Space for Giants and Chester Zoo, conducted a photographic survey of the Nubian giraffe in Pian Upe WR between 4-7 April 2023 using individual-based spatially explicit photographic survey methods.

### Results

During the survey, the team covered over 214 km and observed 34 unique giraffe, including seven new calves (five males, two females). These calves were the first giraffe born in Pian Upe WR since giraffe were extirpated from this region in 1996. All but two of the initial founder populations were encountered and observed during these surveys. **We estimate the current population of Nubian giraffe in Pian Upe WR to be 34-36 individuals.**

Herd size ranged from one single individual to a maximum of 29 individuals. Larger herds were comprised predominantly of adult females with calves. All herds were observed in the whistling thorn (*Vachellia drepanolobium*) savannahs east of the main road. All encounter records were uploaded to a dedicated online database on the GiraffeSpotter platform.

This population growth is a positive early indicator of translocation success. Continued post-translocation population monitoring is critical for documenting continued recruitment rates and calf survival in this newly re-established population.

### Acknowledgements

We thank our colleagues at UWA for the partnership in re-establishing this significant population of critically endangered Nubian giraffe. The professionalism and dedication of the UWA team, particularly the research and monitoring team in Pian Upe WR engenders a deep sense of hope for this population. We also thank the Chester Zoo for their financial support to conduct this survey, and especially Sarah Roffe, Rossie Owen, and Alison Biggar as valuable survey team members. Space for Giants and Peter Trevor provided excellent access and coordination of personnel to find many of the elusive giraffe. Karamojong Overland Safaris provided invaluable logistical support and personnel to assist in the surveys. Additionally, we thank Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, Glenmorangie, and the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland for their ongoing financial support of our Uganda giraffe conservation programme.

