

Giraffe Surveys Report

Lake Mburo National Park

2024 - 2025

Background

Lake Mburo National Park (NP) is home to Uganda’s southern-most critically endangered Nubian giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis camelopardalis*) population. These giraffe were introduced in 2015 during a conservation translocation necessitated by oil development in Murchison Falls NP, and the need for establishing other viable Nubian giraffe populations in the country. In total, 15 Nubian giraffe were initially introduced and by 2023, the population had increased to 52 individuals – an increase of 247% over 8 years. The park is surrounded by predominantly cattle rearing communities, which often leads to human-wildlife conflict. Other threats are through giraffe calf predation by large carnivores, such as leopard (*Panthera pardus*) and spotted hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*).

In the first-ever National Giraffe Conservation Strategy and Action Plan for Uganda (2020-2030), long-term population monitoring was highlighted as an important objective. The Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF) has monitored the population since their introduction, and this report details findings from surveys conducted in April 2024 and March 2025. Data from this project will help to better inform conservation and management in Lake

Mburo NP and broader strategies for Nubian giraffe in Uganda.

Objective

Our main objective is to conduct long-term monitoring and analysis of the Nubian giraffe in Lake Mburo NP.

Specific research goals included:

- Surveying the Nubian giraffe population in Lake Mburo NP annually.
- Developing local research and monitoring capacity in Lake Mburo NP.
- Identifying and mitigating emerging conservation threats to Nubian giraffe.

Results

The surveys were conducted over 2 days in 2024 and 3 days in 2025, which resulted in 29 individuals encountered in 2024, and 63 individuals in 2025. The low numbers in 2024 were likely a result of higher-than-normal rainfall during the surveys resulting in a concentration of the Nubian giraffe around the thickets and woodlands in the centre of the 370km² park. Five calves were recorded in 2024 and six in 2025. Overall, we estimate a minimum of 65 unique Nubian giraffe in Lake Mburo NP.

As part of developing local research and monitoring capacity in Uganda, Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) rangers and students from Makerere University participated in the surveys, and were trained in survey methods, data collection and recording using the EarthRanger App.

Conservation outcomes

The exponential growth of the Nubian giraffe population in Lake Mburo NP is clear evidence of the success of the initial 2015 conservation translocation. The population has more than tripled since then, despite predation. Continued long-term monitoring is recommended to ensure the positive trend continues and also

to assess any potential impacts from the increasing human pressure around the park. Ultimately, a better understanding of the population dynamics and genetic health will help UWA to make informed management decisions for Nubian giraffe in the country.

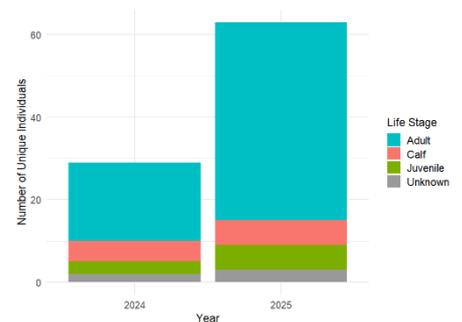


Fig 2. Number of Nubian giraffe observed in Lake Mburo NP by age class during the 2024 and 2025 surveys.

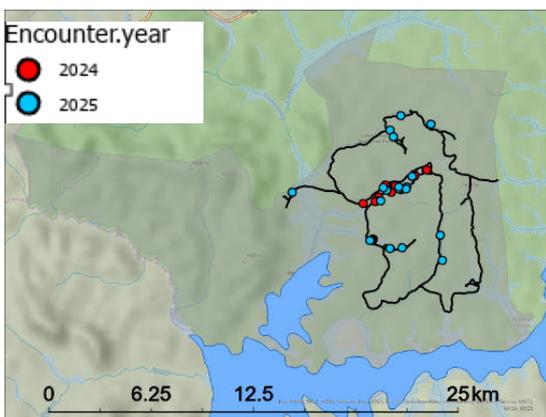


Fig 1. Distribution of Nubian giraffe in Lake Mburo NP during the 2024 and 2025 surveys.