

## Giraffe Surveys Report

### Pian Upe Wildlife Reserve

2024 - 2025

### Background

In the 1960s, Pian Upe Wildlife Reserve (WR), one of Uganda’s largest parks, supported one of the country’s largest Nubian giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis camelopardalis*) population. However, by the late 1990s, all were locally extirpated, mainly due to regional instability and illegal hunting. The Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), with support from the Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF), drafted the first-ever National Giraffe Conservation Strategy and Action Plan for Uganda (2020-2030), which established a precedence to ramp up Nubian giraffe conservation efforts in the country. One of the key outcomes was highlighting the importance of Pian Upe WR as a key future conservation area for the *critically endangered* Nubian giraffe. Subsequently, UWA took steps to enhance security in the reserve and ultimately, reintroduced Nubian giraffe from Murchison Falls National Park with GCF’s support: 14 Nubian giraffe in 2019, and 15 individuals in 2021. Long-term monitoring of GF showed in 2023 that the population had increased to 34 individuals. This report details findings from surveys in April 2024 and April 2025. The data will help to better inform conservation and management in Pian Upe WR as well as broader strategies for Nubian giraffe in Uganda.

### Objective

Our main objective is to conduct long-term monitoring and analysis of the Nubian giraffe in Pian Upe WR.

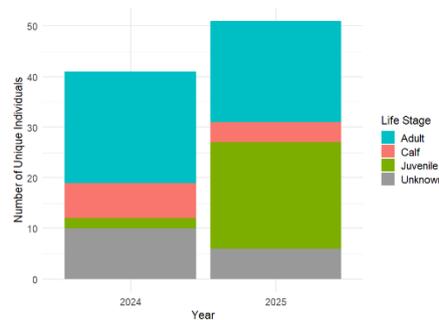
Specific research goals included:

- Annually surveying the Nubian giraffe population in Pian Upe WR.
- Developing local research and monitoring capacity in Pian Upe WR.
- Identifying and mitigating emerging conservation threats to Nubian giraffe.

### Results

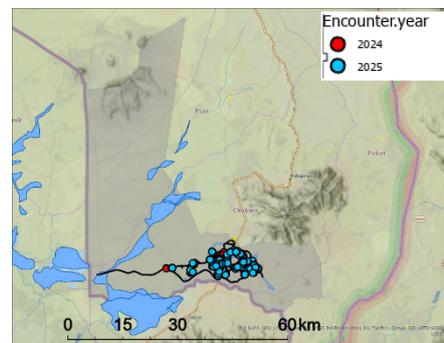
The surveys were conducted over 8 days in 2024 and 14 days in 2025, which

resulted in 41 individuals encountered in 2024, and 51 in 2025. Overall, we estimate a minimum of 52 unique Nubian giraffe in Pian Upe WR, an increase of 53% over the past 2 years. The giraffe were predominantly observed in the whistling thorn (*Vachellia drepanolobium*) savannahs in the south-eastern part of the reserve.



**Fig 1.** Number of Nubian giraffe observed in Pian Upe WR by age class.

As part of developing local research and monitoring capacity in Uganda, UWA, Makerere University, and Space for Giants (SFG) rangers and students were trained students in survey methods, data collection and recording using the EarthRanger App. In 2025, the GCF team also trained the SFG team in the use of GiraffeSpotter software for individual identification and long-term monitoring.



**Fig 2.** Distribution of Nubian giraffe in Pian Upe WR (2024 and 2025 surveys).

### Conservation outcomes

In 2024-25, 10 new giraffe calves were spotted. The observed population growth since 2023 is a positive indicator that the Nubian giraffe have adapted well to the reserve post-translocation.

Additionally, limited predation risk, reduction of illegal grazing in the reserve, and relatively high survival rates show that Pian Upe WR was a suitable habitat for Nubian giraffe reintroduction in Uganda. Continued long-term monitoring using the GiraffeSpotter database is recommended to ensure the positive trend continues. Ultimately, a better understanding of its population dynamics and genetic health will help UWA to make informed management decisions for Nubian giraffe in the country.

