CROCODILE FENCE CAN SAVE LIVES

By Monday Francis

After 4 death incidents by crocodiles in Katwe, the local government has now decided to construct a crocodile fence in Kakoni to try to save human lives. The purpose of the fence is to provide a security buffer at the water fetching points.

The fence will be two meters by two meters in the water, and 1 meter up on the shore. A narrow entrance gate will make it impossible for the crocodiles to enter from the shore, and sandbags will be used on both sides of the fence in the water, to ensure that the crocodiles cannot dig under the fence. Zimo Construction Company is going to do the construction work.

In the past decade there have been an increasing number of Nile crocodile citations in the Kazinga Channel and Lake Edward. The first attack on human beings was in September 2009, when Matovu Razak, a 12 year old boy was attacked and killed while fetching water.

The second attack was in December 2010 when Byaruhanga James, a fisherman from Kakoni was attacked while checking his fishing nets. He survived with minor injuries.

Thirdly Mbambu Jonice, a 13 year old girl was attacked and killed while washing clothes in January 2011. In December 2011 Mrs. Mazinga from Kakoni survived a crocodile attack while washing utensils.

The last attack was on 22nd of December 2011 when Tugume Byaruhanga, a 15 year old boy was attacked and killed when he was swimming in Rwenjubu.

Nanyonga Veronica lost her beloved son Tugume Byaruhanga in a crocodile attack last year. She feels like the Uganda Wildlife Authority does not care about crocodile attacks.

Nanyonga Veronica is the mother of the child who was killed recently. She cried when she told the story about how she lost her son.

“The Uganda Wildlife Authority does not care about people who have lost their beloved ones. When the crocodile killed him, the Wildlife Authority never minded about looking for the dead body. This was done by the people in the area,” she said.

Nanyonga said that it took the community 48 hours to find the dead body which had sunk deep in the water. The fishermen had to use fishing nets to collect the boy’s body.

The burial took place on the same day the dead body was found. The Uganda Wildlife authority never offered any help to the family who had lost their son. The mother is very poor and could not afford to pay for the funeral. The natives of the area had to give her financial aid.

“What do you think about the crocodile fence which is about to be built?”

“It will be easier for people to improve their swimming skills, but how will people be sure that the crocodile fence will protect them? During the dry season the water will extend and the crocodiles might be waiting at the shore before people enter the fence,” said Nanyonga.

She also fears that people do not have time to walk all the way to the crocodile fence, and then to line up to get their water.

The construction of the Kakoni fence is just about to start. USAID STAR has funded 23 million shilling and Katwe Kabatoro Town Council has also contributed 5 million shilling. If the project is successful and people use the fence in a proper way, a fence will also be built at Tophill and Rwenjubu.
SEVEN ARRESTED FOR ILLEGAL FISHING

By Melody Jasmine

On April 19, 2012 six women and one man were arrested for illegal fishing in Katwe. It is illegal to catch fish smaller than 12 inches long, but this group of people were caught with fish smaller than 3 inches.

“If people continue to catch fish this small, the lake will be destroyed and they will lack food in the future,” said John Tinkasimire Makasi, the chairman of Beach Management Unit (BMU). A thousand kilos of fish were confiscated by the police and some smoked fish which will be brought to court as evidence.

“Police Inspector Deo Kisembo says they are looking into this matter and they will continue arresting people who violate the fishing laws. He says it’s a problem that people are hiding small fish under the bigger fish in the basket.

“What will happen to the confiscated fish?”

“Some of it will be kept for evidence in court. The rest of it will be given to schools and people in prison,” said Kisembo.

100,000 FLAMINGOS ARRIVING

By Kahindo Lilian

Lake Munyanyange is located in western Uganda within Kasese District surrounded by Queen Elizabeth National Park. It is crossed by the Western Albertine Rift Valley in between Kyambura and Katojo escarpment in Queen Elizabeth National Park.

There are two species of flamingos, the Lesser Flamingo and the Greater Flamingo. The one which always comes to Lake Munyanyange is the Lesser Flamingo.

Flamingos always fly in a V-shape pattern. Roosting areas are in the explosion crater lakes within the Western and the Eastern Rift Valley. They always come from the Western Rift Valley explosion crater lakes such as Lake Nakuru in Kenya, Lake Natron in Tanzania, Almentaita and Bongoria. The major one is Lake Nakuru.

Flamingos are water birds webbed more than 24cm long. They have curved bills and bristles used for filter feeding.

Young ones are white and the mature ones are pink. They always feed on Red Algae, Brine Shrimps and Ceano Bacteria. The more pink the food source the more pink the birds become.

Flamingos have a sixth sense special for migration. They are seasonal, meaning migration depends on the water level in the crater. During the dry season the crater becomes dry and in the rainy season the crater is full of rain water. When there is water there is plenty of food for flamingos.

The Lesser Flamingos lay their eggs in mud on the lake shores. They pile the mud higher than the water level.

Seasonality for spotting flamingos is June, July, very late August and November to early January.

Migrating birds are classified into two classes. Flamingos are Intra African species the other is the European migrant species called Pale Arctic migrants.

About twenty one million Americans went bird watching in the world in 1991. If bird watchers are attracted to Uganda at about 2%, it is profitable for the tourism economy of Uganda because bird watchers spend more days in country than other tourist types like Gorilla trekkers. (From Ouma Richardson, Tourist Guide).
RAINFALL AFFECTS SALT EXTRACTION

By Kagaba Vincent

Salt extraction is the main activity carried out in Lake Katwe in Katwe Kabatooro Town Council. However, the period of rain fall at Lake Katwe is a big problem to the people who extract salt. When it rains all the salt pans are filled up with rain water which is not good in the salt pan. This was revealed by James, a salt miner in Namba Wu, a place in the salt lake, which is north of the lake.

He added that he, as a salt miner, in periods of rain fall his salt pans are destroyed. Even salt which is kept in the salt pan is being eaten away by the rain water. Salt dissolves in rain water, which brings a lot of losses to the salt miner.

James said that during the rainy season he may not even go to work at his salt pans because he earns nothing. James said, in mid March up to June he has problems paying school fees for his two sons and one daughter. The little money he had earned before he uses to buy food and pay debts for repairing of his salt pans.

As a result of paying debts and buying food for the family he is left with little money to repair the salt pans in July when the rainy season is over.

James said that when it reaches July he looks for other means of getting money in a nearby Sacco called Kkabude which helps him to repair the destroyed salt pans.

James concluded that by God’s mercy he removes the excess water by the use of a generator which pumps excess water out of the salt pan. By that time he can easily begin to work in his salt pan for that season.

MASTER PREDATOR

By Monday Francis

Its body weight is 990 kilos and its length is 6 meters. It’s the master predator, cannibal and scavenger.

The Nile crocodile has pores on its tail unlike other animals. They are thought to have become extinct in the Seychelles in the early 19th century. It is known that they inhabit Lake Edward.

It feeds mainly on mammals. It escapes the dry season by digging itself deep into the mud below the river banks on the lake shores. When the level of water reduces, some crocodiles become trapped in small water pools. It may be difficult for them to cross 4 kilometres of dry land with their short legs. For such a bulky aquatic reptile they can move faster when necessary. Sometimes they slide along their own belly.

The king of the water keeps its cold blooded body within a 3 degree range of its normal temperature of 25-26 degrees Celsius. Because of its unique body temperature regulation, it is a strong swimmer and diver and it can submerge in the water for hours. It can stay in the water seven times as long as a hippo. However, none of these qualities has helped the crocodile survive poaching by man.

The crocodile’s jaw actually works as more of a clamp than for biting. It has a slashing weapon – its tail - which it uses to get a firm grip on a victim with powerful tail strokes. The crocodile rolls over and over in the water until the prey drowns and then it rips the prey up and eats it.

It is sexually active from 7-15 years of age. Breeding season varies with altitude but it is usually during the dry season. The number of eggs it lays is from 25-100; hatching period is 95-100 days. Birth intervals are annually. Typical diet is mammals, cattle, reptiles including other crocodiles and fish. The young Nile crocodile feeds on insects and frogs. Its life expectancy is 70-100 years.

The crocodile type in Uganda is Nile Nilotecus, the order is Crocodylis, and the family is Crocodylidae. The largest reptile in Uganda, it can reach a full size of 6 meters from snout to the tail.

The crocodile is able to remain submerged for more than one hour as it waits to ambush its prey. Massively powerful it can drag a full grown cow under the water in just a few seconds. The killer has a dark bronze colouration above the black spots on the back and dirty purple on the belly. The flanks are yellowish green in colour.

The way to protect the crocodile is by not poisoning them through meat, not laying nets at places where they breed, avoiding contact with them and by not hunting or fishing them.
Kimulya Yowas from KKATIC is giving free trees to residents of Katwe.

By Mugisha Ronald and Batsurana Brian.

The Katwe Kabatooro Tourism Information Centre (KKATIC) has come up with a developmental idea of giving a tree for free to the members of the community which will soon be given to the people.

The tree planting project was started early February 2012 by two gentlemen Maate John and Kimulya Yowas under an organisation called Good Hope Foundation. It said that they borrowed land from KKATIC.

KKATIC gave them a small piece of land from where seeds of Acacia tree have been sown and have germinated to one inch tall above the ground.

Yowas said, “On his behalf he decided to start the project so as to give them freely to people such that Katwe can obtain some objectives and these could be, modifying the climate, reduce desertification in Katwe, reduce soil erosion and lastly said that they grew Acacia for providing herb to cure diseases such as stomach ache.”

He also added that they grew trees so that they can help in providing firewood to the local people so that they would not encroach into the park, because this has led to animals moving far into the park thereby hindering tourism.

He said that they are facing problems such as harsh weather conditions and encroachment of domestic animals like goats that feed on the growing Acacia. However they have tried to solve these problems by fencing the land to stop encroachment of goats. (Information collected from Kimulya Yowas)

ILLEGAL FISHING IN KAKONI

By Batsurana Brian

On April 19, 2012, the Beach Management Unit (BMU) went over to the fish mongers who were practicing fishing in the breeding zone. Additionally they were using under sized nets in a zone called Kakoni at Lake Edward.

Some of the people who where around complained saying that the BMU chairperson does not like the people who stay in that area and that he is against them.

Some boys who where around said that they do illegal fishing because they don’t have enough money to buy the good quality nets that are required by the BMU. Nets of at least 4 inches and boats of 12 meters long are the official sizes to be used for fishing legally.

They added that they know that it is bad but it is because of the difficult life they live in that obliged them to do so. They know that it is not good to use under sized nets for fishing.

The BMU chairperson, Tinkasimere John Makasi, said that they will continue making daily operations on the lake and mostly in the breeding areas. He also said that they will arrest and jail those who are caught fishing illegally.

He finalised saying that they will work by tooth and nail to stop illegal fishing. The main reason why they are against illegal fishing is because they want to preserve fish for future generations.
**SALT FORMATION AT LAKE KATWE**

By Nsimenta Marion

Lake Katwe is located in western Uganda within Kasese District surrounded by Queen Elizabeth National Park. It is crossed by the Western Albertine Rift Valley in between Kyambura and Katojo escarpment in Queen Elizabeth National Park.

The national park has 52 explosion crater lakes but Lake Katwe is unique because it has inlets but not outlets. Lake Katwe lies on the same colour line with other crater lakes such as Munyanyange.

About 200 meters deep in Lake Katwe there is a presence of sodium chloride. When spring water diffuses under ground miners find rocks of salt dissolved in them. These are rocks where water cannot pass through and as a result the water goes back to the surface in a liquid concentration which is about 13.5% sodium chloride. Local people around Lake Katwe have done traditional mining since the 15th century.

Local people dig salt pans and make a channel. The channel directs saline water from the main lake into the salt pan. Then they wait for the dry season. After intensive evaporation, because of micro climate, the saline water forms concentrated solution of sodium chloride.

Scum forms as crystals evaporate when water is sprinkled on top of the crystals. The crystals go to the bottom of the salt pan. Miners do this on a daily basis for accumulation of sodium chloride crystals within the salt pan. After one week sediment will be formed. Then a scraper is used to get the crystals together. They use water in the salt pan to wash the salt and make it clean. It is taken out for drying and after drying it becomes white sodium chloride ready for work.

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**FISHING AT LAKE EDWARD**

By Akampurira Joshua

Fishing hours at Lake Edward are from 4:00pm to 6:00pm then again at 8:00pm at the land. Fishermen cannot just set nets anywhere but must set nets in waters 200 meters from the shore. The reason why they do not set nets nearby (below 200 meters) is that the area is a breeding place for fish. Another reason is it is a habitant for living animals like fish, crocodile, hippos, birds and water insects. Crocodiles in Lake Edward have attacked people by destroying their nets when they are set.

At the Lake Edward landing site is where everybody goes fishing. People who are supposed to go fishing are skilled men who are 18 years and above.

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**FIRST GRADUATION SINCE 2000**

By Kabahendah Jazilah

Uganda Wild Life Training Institute (UWTI) held its first graduation since 2000. Those who completed their courses between the years 2000-2011 never graduated. There were 200 grandaunts with certificates and diplomas in wild life management.

The invited guests of honour were the Secretary Minister of Tourism, Professor Ephaim Kamuntu and Wild Life Officer and Minister of Tourism, Mr. Lutalo James.

UWTI began twenty one years ago by a project of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Food Agricultural Organization (FAO). The institute’s last graduation was in 2000.

Among the grandaunts were those who had started working in Queen Elizabeth National Park and Kidepo and Bwindi National Parks. The grandaunts were advised on how to care for wild animals and how to control the wild life.

There are two wild life training institutes in east Africa, one in Tanzania and UWTI in Uganda.