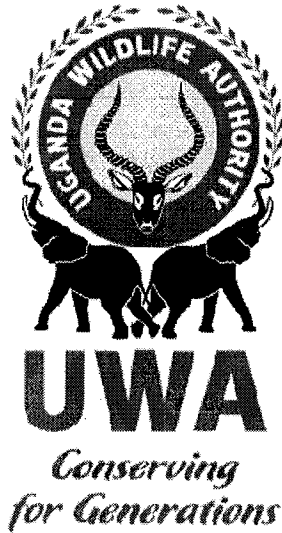


UGANDA WILDLIFE AUTHORITY



**GUIDELINES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF GORILLA / CHIMPANZEE TRACKING AND
OTHER TOURISM PRODUCTS**

REVISED FEBRUARY 2024

1. PREAMBLE

Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) was established in 1996 by an Act of Parliament, Uganda Wildlife Statute 1996 (now Uganda Wildlife Act, 2019) with the mandate to conserve and sustainably manage wildlife for the benefit of the people of Uganda and the global community. Section (1)(g) of the Uganda Wildlife Act, 2019 mandates the Authority “to charge fees for services it provides and for the licenses, rights and any other permission that it may grant” The Act further authorizes the Board of Trustees to guide the process of sustainable utilization of the resources. Similarly, Section 86(2)(c) of Uganda Wildlife Act, 2019 mandates the Minister in consultation with the Board to formulate regulations prescribing fines and fees to be paid under the Act.

2. UWA MISSION AND CORE VALUES

The mission of UWA is to conserve, economically develop and sustainably manage the wildlife and protected areas of Uganda in partnership with the neighboring

communities and other stakeholders for the benefit of the people of Uganda and the global community.

The Core Values are:

- i. Strong commitment to conservation;
- ii. Integrity
- iii. Team work;
- iv. Excellent service
- v. Professionalism;

3. OBJECTIVES

The purpose of these guidelines is to facilitate efficient management of the gorilla, chimpanzee tracking and other tourism products from reservation, booking, payments, reschedules, cancellations and refunds, in an efficient and effective manner

The main objectives of the guidelines are:

- i. To provide quality service to the visitors
- ii. To provide guidance to visitors on the procedures for obtaining Permits for tourism products and services.
- iii. To provide guidance on the management of payments for tourism products and services and emerging issues related to reschedules, cancellations and refunds;
- iv. To enable UWA to collect data on the visitors engaging in tourism products and services

- v. To enhance efficiency in revenue collection of tourism products and services

4. LOCATION OF GORILLA FAMILIES AND CHIMPANZEE COMMUNITIES AND DESIGNATED TRACKING /ENTRY POINTS

a. Gorillas

- i) Gorilla tracking provides an opportunity for visitors to find and observe gorillas in their natural habitat.
- ii) Gorilla Habituation Experience allows visitors to accompany researchers and habituators into the forests for the purpose of participation in the process of getting the gorillas accustomed to humans
- iii) Gorillas in Uganda are currently found in BINP and MGNP. The following locations, known as sectors shall be the designated entry points for gorilla and chimpanzee tracking
 - a. Buhoma VIC
 - b. Ruhija VIC
 - c. NkuringoVIC
 - d. Rushaga VIC
 - e. Ntebeko / Muhvura VIC (Nyakagezi)
- iv) Different gorilla families are given names for ease of identification for conservation purposes. However, the booking of permits shall be made based on the date and designated entry points mentioned above.
- v) Other entry points may be established taking into consideration the movement of the gorillas within their habitat.
- vi) Within the sectors, visitors shall be allocated to track specific gorilla family groups on the day of tracking and as per the approved gorilla tracking Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs).
- vii) Persons found tracking in undesignated entry points, without UWA guides and without authentic permits and proof of payments shall be arrested and prosecuted.

b. Chimpanzees

- i) Chimpanzee tracking provides an opportunity for visitors to find and observe Chimpanzees in their natural habitat.
- ii) Chimpanzee Habituation Experience allows visitors to accompany researchers and habituators into the forests for the purpose of participation in the process of getting them accustomed to humans
- iii) Habituated chimpanzees in UWA managed protected areas are currently found in Kibale National Park and Queen Elizabeth Conservation Area. The following locations, known as sectors shall be the designated entry points for gorilla and chimpanzee tracking
 - a. Kanyanchu

b. Buraiga

c. Kyambura (Queen Elizabeth National Park)

ii) Other locations may be opened and will be communicated by IWA management

6. MINIMUM AGE LIMIT

The minimum age limit for tracking and viewing gorillas 15 years while that for tracking and viewing chimpanzees is 12 years

7. VISITOR CATEGORIES

- a) The prices for permits vary based on the residence status of the visitors. The visitor categories are indicated below:
- i) East African Community (**EAC**) citizens: Citizens from the East African Community (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Somalia and any other that may join the EAC at a later date). This also includes refugees officially registered in Uganda.
 - ii) Rest of Africa (**ROA**) citizens: Citizens from an African country that does not fall within the EAC community
 - iii) Foreign Residents (**FR**): Foreign citizens, resident in the East African Community States with valid work permits or resident visas/permits.
 - iv) Foreign Non Residents (**FNR**): Visitors from outside of the East African Community.
- b) Visitor category shall be verified with the relevant documentation as highlighted below:
- i) For EAC citizens, the documentation shall be valid National ID or passport from the member state or refugee ID issued by the Uganda Office of the Prime Minister
 - ii) For ROA, the documentation shall be a valid passport.
 - iii) For FR, the documentation shall be a valid passport, work permit, certificate of residence, dependent pass or student pass issued by EAC member states.
 - iv) For FNR, the documentation shall be a valid passport.
- c) Where a visitor is booked under one category but appears for an activity in a different category without prior notice to UWA, it shall be construed as attempted fraud and the tour operator, together with the visitor shall be held liable.

8. PROCEDURE FOR RESERVING AND PURCHASING TRACKING PERMITS FROM UWA

UWA operates an automated system to manage the sale of gorilla and chimpanzee tracking Permits. The procedure below shall apply for reserving and purchasing tracking and habituation Permits for gorillas and chimpanzees:

- i) UWA will sell gorilla and Chimpanzee tracking permit to only those tour and travel operators licensed by Uganda Tourism Board (UTB).
- ii) All Foreign Non Resident tracking permits have to be purchased through a Tour operator licensed by UTB.

10. HOW TO RESERVE AND PAY FOR A PERMIT.

A permit may be reserved and paid for in full (100% payment) in advance for tracking dates that fall within a period not exceeding one (1) year from the date of reservation as follows:

a) OFFLINE MECHANISM FOR RESERVATION AND PAYMENT:

- A permit booking starts with making an inquiry with UWA to find out if there is availability of tracking slots in the preferred tracking location and on the preferred tracking date.
- This inquiry may be made through email, by phone call to the UWA reservations contact numbers, or by walking in to the UWA reservations locations listed above and talking directly to a UWA sales executive
- Where there is no availability, the operator will be informed by the UWA sales executive and advised on which dates and locations have availability.

- The system will display a calendar that will clearly show dates and locations that have availability, and where there is no availability, the operator will not be able to progress beyond that window
- If there is availability, the system will guide the operator on the next steps to take up to the point of paying using their card details or mobile money.
- For online payments for the gorilla and chimpanzee tracking services, full payment (100%) shall be made immediately using the tour operator card and mobile money details

NOTE: Uganda Wildlife Authority reserves the right to amend these terms from time to time.

NOTE: All payments will be made in full at the time of paying. No deposits will be accepted by UWA

11. PAYMENT METHODS

The acceptable payment methods are:

i) **Online payment (card or mobile money)**

Permits may be booked or reserved through the internet (online). The following terms shall apply:

- a) Eligible Tour Operators may be given access to the booking system to reserve and book. The admission of the tour company to the booking system shall be done at UWA headquarters as per the prescribed application form.
- b) Upon reserving the permits online, a system generated booking ID and invoice shall be provided to the client.
- c) The client shall make payment against the invoice through their card or mobile money or any other available online payment options as advised by UWA.
- d) All payments for permits booked online shall be made immediately and in full
- e) Upon successful payment for the permits, a system generated receipt shall be sent to the client's email

Where the Tour Operator or visitor fails to make full payment for the permits due to challenges with their card or mobile money balances, such booking or reservation shall be automatically cancelled.

ii) **Point of Sale (POS) card payment**

- a) All UWA products and services can be paid for through card payments via our Point of Sale machines located at all the payment centers including all UWA gates, park headquarters, visitor information centers, reservations office, and the Sheraton visitor information center.
- b) However, Gorilla and chimpanzee permits shall be paid for only at the Kampala locations indicated in 8(v) above
- c) UWA has installed both United states dollar and Uganda Shillings point of sale machines at all our payment centers which accept all visa enabled cards.
- d) After the client is invoiced, the visitor will insert the card into the machine and enter their PIN code.
- e) A Uganda Wildlife Authority Receipt as well as the POS slip will be issued to the client once the machine accepts the payment

iii) **Bank deposits/transfers to UWA accounts.**

- a) UWA shall officially provide the bank account on which all monies for UWA products and services will be deposited
- b) All bank deposits or bank transfers shall be done based on a system generated invoice. For avoidance of doubt, partial settlement of bank deposits/transfers will not be accepted.
- c) Upon payment by deposit or bank transfer, a payment advise slip from the bank will be presented by the tour operator or visitor to an authorized UWA officer for verification to ascertain whether the total invoiced amounts have reflected on the UWA bank accounts.
- d) For payment for gorilla and chimpanzee tracking permits, the verifications of bank transfers and deposits will be done at the UWA headquarters in Kampala

- b) UWA has provided mobile money payment options at all its payment centers including all UWA gates, park headquarters, visitor information centers, reservations office, and the Sheraton visitor information center
- c) Each UWA payment location has its own merchant code which will be displayed in clear view of the client
- d) However, Gorilla and chimpanzee hermits shall be paid for using the mobile

13. VERIFICATION OF PERMITS IN THE NATIONAL PARK AND UNDERTAKING THE GORILLA AND CHIMPANZEE TRACKING ACTIVITY

- a) All visitors shall be required to report to the designated entry point's reception for permit validation / verification, orientation and briefing prior undertaking any tracking.
- b) Validation will involve cross checking documents provided by the client against UWA records in the booking system
- c) Upon successful validation, visitors will be allowed to proceed for briefing by UWA guides
- d) All gorilla and chimpanzee tracking visitors shall be accompanied by UWA guides

- ix) Permits purchased through promotional offers and those issued as complimentary permits shall not be rescheduled. Such permits shall be forfeited if not used on the provided dates and locations.
- x) However, commission permits shall be eligible for reshchedule to dates that fall within one year from the quarter for which they were issued. The rest of the reschedule guidelines will apply including the surcharge at the second reschedule.
- xi) Reschedules of permits shall only apply within the same conservation areas and for the same activity.

15. CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS FOR GORILLA AND CHIMPANZEE TRACKING OR HABITUATION EXPERIENCES

UWA may approve cancellations and make refund of monies paid for gorilla and chimpanzee tracking or habituation experiences. The following shall be the

to track gorillas or chimpanzees due to illness. This cancellation policy shall only apply to visitors already in the park to track gorillas and chimpanzees but develop or show signs of illness before tracking. This refund will be less any incidental costs (taxes and bank charges) already incurred by UWA

vi) The Executive Director may authorize cancellation of a permit and processing of a refund of 50% of the permit value to client who fails to track gorillas or chimpanzees due to an accident sustained in the Park before

16. AMENDMENT

These guidelines may be amended by UWA from time to time.