



## Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund Half Year Report (due 31<sup>st</sup> October 2021)

<b>Project reference</b>	IWT073
<b>Project title</b>	Strengthening anti-poaching techniques and countering wildlife trafficking in Uganda
<b>Country(ies)</b>	Uganda
<b>Lead organisation</b>	Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)
<b>Partners(s)</b>	Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA); National Wildlife Crime Coordination Task Force (NWCCTF)
<b>Project leader</b>	
<b>Report date and number (e.g. HYR1)</b>	31 October 2021 (HYR3)
<b>Projector Leader Name</b>	Simon Nampindo
<b>Project website/blog/social media</b>	<a href="https://uganda.wcs.org/strengthening-anti-poaching-techniques-and-%20countering-wildlife-trafficking.aspx">https://uganda.wcs.org/strengthening-anti-poaching-techniques-and-%20countering-wildlife-trafficking.aspx</a>

**1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed project implementation timetable (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up to end September).**

During the reporting period, the following activities were implemented and or supported:

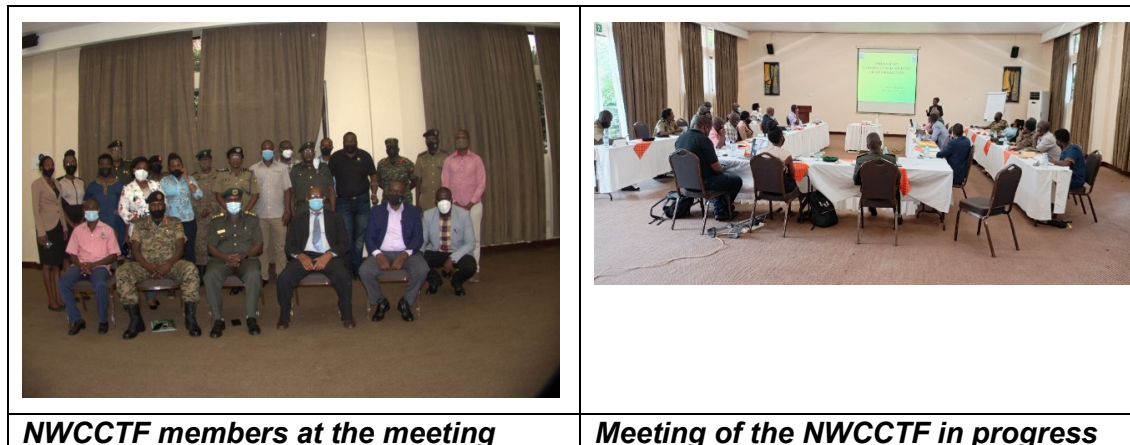
***2.7: Support NWCCTF quarterly meetings to analyze intelligence information and plan joint operations***

On August 20, 2021, WCS facilitated a one-day quarterly meeting for the NWCCTF. The meeting was attended by 26 (6 females and 20 males) focal persons of the NWCCTF from Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), Uganda Peoples Defence Forces, INTERPOL/Uganda Police Force, Internal Security Organisation, Financial Intelligence Authority, National Forestry Authority, Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, Uganda Revenue Authority, Uganda Civil Aviation Authority and Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration. The meeting was chaired by the Deputy Director Field Operations of UWA who represented the Chairperson NWCCTF/ Executive Director UWA who could not attend the meeting because of other official commitments.

The meeting reviewed and adopted the minutes of the previous meeting held in March 2021, gave updates on the activities implemented/supported by NWCCTF, including one field operation against armed poaching conducted in June 2021 in Oyam district near Murchison Falls Protected Area. During the operation, one gun with 20 rounds of ammunition was recovered, four suspects arrested, of which, two were suspected armed poachers and the other two were UPDF soldiers suspected to be facilitating armed poaching by providing ammunition to the armed poachers. The NWCCTF secretariat distributed the NWCCTF awareness materials to the member institutions, and presented the work plan for quarter two. INTERPOL updated the NWCCTF on its planned operation, seeking their support. The operations commander highlighted some challenges faced by the NWCCTF namely frequent transfers and

replacements of focal persons by different institutions of the taskforce, internal delays in releasing funds to support taskforce activities and lack of sustainable source of funding for the task force activities. It is important to note that we were not able to get the authentically signed copy of the minutes by the time of compiling this report because the officials concerned were out of office. A signed copy of the approved minutes will be obtained at a later date and attached in the end of year project report.

Find below the link for the copy of the minutes:



## **2.8: Support NWCCTF to conduct overt and covert operations**

WCS supported UWA to conduct a de-snaring mission in Murchison Falls National Park (MFNP) and Queen Elizabeth National Park (QENP). Poaching for bush meat has been identified as one of the major threats to wildlife conservation in MFNP and QENP. The majority of poachers use wire snares and metal traps to catch mainly antelopes and buffalos. However, the wire snares and traps are indiscriminate and catch all species including elephants, giraffes and lions, causing immense pain, suffering and death to wildlife species of MFNP.

As a follow up operation to the de-snaring exercise that was executed in March 2021 in MFNP for 10 days where 900 wire snares were collected, a de-snaring mission for 10 days was organised between June 30 – July 10, 2021. The mission objectives were to: identify, remove and safely store the snares and traps laid out in the park for appropriate disposal by UWA; prevent the capture of wild animals by snares and traps; arrest suspected poachers found inside the parks during the de-snaring mission for prosecution by formal courts; and rescue and treat snared live animals encountered during the de-snaring mission.

During this mission in Latoro, Kololo, Got Apwoyo, Tangi River, Pakuba Lodge, Kituna valley, Samanya, Delta and Buligi Area in the northern bank of MFNP and in Ishasha sector and Kigezi Wildlife Reserve in QECA, 686 wire snares (09 = QECA and 677 = MFNP), one wheel trap and one snare trap were collected, one fishing net, 11 snared wild animals were recorded and one suspected poacher was arrested. Of these, four live animals were rescued from wire snares and released during the operation, five animals had been harvested by poachers while two were found dead on wire snares, but not harvested by poachers. The rescued animals were one male Johnson Hartebeest and three female Uganda Kobs. The animals that were harvested by poachers included two male Uganda Kobs, a hippopotamus, a buffalo and Jonhson Hartebeest while those that were not harvested by poachers were one male Water buck and one male Warthog.

We observed a decrease in poaching across all hotspot areas targeted for the de-snaring exercise in QECA (Ishasha sector and Kigezi Wildlife Reserve). The reduction in poacher trend is attributed to among others the several interventions by UWA and support from partners like WCS.

Find the details of these activities in the links:

**Table 1: Wire snare locations and snared wildlife species**

Area or track name	No of wire snares	No of Metal / snare traps	Species of snared animals	
Latoro, Kololo – Got Apwoyo	264	1	Uganda Kobs Warthog	2 1
Tangi River, Tangi valley, Fire line, Kituna valley	385	0	Water Buck Buffalo Hippopotamus Uganda Kob	1 1 1 3
Samanya, Delta	05	0		
Buligi area	23	0	Hartebeest 02	2
Ishasha sector, Kigezi WR	09	1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>686</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>11</b>

**Table 2: Species of snared wildlife**

Animal Species	Number Snared	Rescued	Harvested	Not Harvested
Buffalo	1	0	1	0
Hartebeest	2	1	1	0
Uganda Kob	5	3	2	0
Warthog	1	0	0	1
Waterbuck	1	0	0	1
Hippopotamus	1	0	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>



**Male Water Buck dead on wire snare**



**Male Warthog found dead on wire snare in Latoro**



**Johnson Hartebeest rescued from wire snare**



**Uganda Kob rescued from wire snare**



**Laid Wire snare**



**Wire snares and Metal trap collected**

**3.2: Enlist community wildlife scouts to support the implementation of the HWC mitigation measures as well as livelihood initiatives**

To increase motivation for the voluntary work done by 20 Community Wildlife Scouts of scaring elephants from peoples' gardens to reduce incidences of crop raiding which lead to human wildlife conflict in Juma Parish, Kamudin Sub County in Oyam District, 100 Kenya Top Bar (KTB) modern beehives were procured and handed over to the scouts in year two of this project implementation. The beehives were established in 3 sites for easy routine maintenance and management. It is important to note that WCS has supported this group to start up a VSLA and fully register as a CBO with the Sub County and District Local Government of Oyam. In this reporting period, this group of Scouts benefited from the Government Parish Model by receiving UGX 30 million to support their livelihood enterprises. A joint monitoring of the apiary sites was conducted by WCS staff, UWA staff and the community wildlife scouts on August 26, 2021. The objective of the field activity was to monitor progress of the apiary project of the Community Wildlife Scouts in Juma Parish who received 100 modern KTB beehives in March 2021. The following observations were made during the monitoring: The sites are well maintained and were fenced off with local poles and barbed wires as it was agreed with the scouts. The local poles and barbed wire were bought by the scouts using money from their group savings. The fencing was done to deter potential conflicts that could arise from bees stinging straying domestic animals and people since the sites were established within the community. Besides, it was done to improve on the security of the apiary sites. 50 out of 100 beehives are colonised. The scouts are organized and still working together to maintain the apiary sites. Seven beehives absconded because of excessive heat and the scouts were advised to create temporary grass thatched structures on top of the beehive to reduce on the amount of direct sunshine hitting the beehives. Find the details of the joint monitoring in the link below:



**Apiary site established by Juma Community Wildlife Scouts in Oyam District**



**Group photo at Juma Community wildlife Scouts, UWA and WCS staff while at Apiary site**

**3.4: Conduct training of community wildlife scouts and park adjacent community members with special consideration of women and youth in livelihood initiatives.**

A meeting organized by Uganda Wildlife Authority Karuma Wildlife Reserve (KWR) Warden in-charge to get updates/ progress, resolve issues and conflicts between the two apiary groups supported under IWT project in 2020 was held at Diima Primary school on August 27, 2021. The meeting was well attended by the group members of the two apiary sites, Local leaders including Local council (LC) Chairpersons I and III together with the Sub County Chiefs of Diima and Nyamahasa Sub Counties, UWA staff from KWR including Warden in – Charge, Warden Community Conservation, Community Conservation Ranger and WCS staff. **The following were raised as some of the key issues that were causing the conflicts among the IWT bee-keeping farmers:**

- i. Some members were lazy and didn't participated in the routine maintenance of the apiary sites. It was observed that this was a habit that even some Community Wildlife Scout Members had exhibited.
- ii. Some group leaders had misappropriated money generated from honey harvested from the group apiary sites.
- iii. Most bee-keeping farmers in both groups of CAN ODIA and RIBE EN TEKO were not ready to give 10% from the proceeds of the sold honey and other hive products to scouts as earlier agreed when they were not participating in the routine maintenance of the apiary sites.
- iv. Some Community Wildlife Scouts come from distant places and are not able to participate in the routine maintenance of the apiary sites where they were allocated beehives as group members.

**The meeting agreed and resolved on the following issues:**

- i. UWA to take responsibility for all activities implemented through WCS and its partners support so that community is able to know that UWA is part of the implementing team. This will improve on the relationship between the community and Park management.
- ii. The Community Wildlife Scouts to split from the main beekeeping group sites and manage their apiary site independently to avoid the issues of 10% principle being remitted by the main beekeeping groups as earlier agreed because it has failed to work.
- iii. 70 out of 150 KTB beehives to be removed from CAN ODIA group and given to Nyamahasa Community Wildlife Scout group and they are to choose their own sites and establish an apiary site. In addition, 32 out of 150 KTB beehives will be removed from RIBE EN TEKO and given to Diima Community Wildlife Scout group because few of the

scouts have accepted to leave the main apiary group as they reside in distant area, making it hard for them to participate in the weekly apiary management activities. They are going to establish a new apiary site which they will manage on their own.

- iv. The groups should review their constitutions and include all key articles.
- v. CAN ODIA and RIBE EN TEKO Beekeeping groups should register with the new Sub Counties of Nyamahasa and Diima respectively so that they can easily benefit from the government programmes available at the Sub County level.
- vi. There is need for proper record keeping by both bee keeping farmers' groups to avoid under declaration and misappropriation of honey, other beehive products and money generated from the apiary sites by executive committee members.
- vii. Members will hold elections to change the older group leadership immediately because they under declared quantity of homey harvested, misappropriated some money realised from the sale of honey from the group apiary, they do not enforce actions and recommendations agreed upon by group members during meetings.
- viii. The beehives that were placed in the Wildlife Reserve to get colonized and are colonized should be brought back to the apiary site to serve their intended objectives of deterring elephants from crossing to the community.
- ix. The beehives should be decongested and some hives taken to other hot spots where elephants cross from and go to the community.
- x. Community scouts who travel long distances to reach the apiary sites should relocate their hive to a hot spot near their homes for easy routine management of the apiary sites.
- xi. Uganda Wildlife Authority (Karuma Wildlife Reserve management) accepted to support the bee keeping farmers and provide transport of the hives to the respective sites chosen.



***Chairperson LC III Diima Sub County, Kiryandongo district giving opening remarks***



**Participants attending the IWT Bee keepers meeting at Diima Primary School**

**Activity 3.5 Purchase equipment for the scouts for HWC mitigation and park adjacent communities for enterprise development.**

WCS procured and delivered equipment to support mitigation of Human Wildlife Conflicts (HWC) in communities adjacent to Karuma Wildlife Reserve by Community Wildlife Scouts in this reporting period.

The equipment procured and delivered to scouts included the following: 30 cartons of matchboxes, 50 torches, 48 boxes of batteries – size D, and 50 catapults were procured and delivered to the scouts in Nyamahasa, Diima and Juma in Kiryandongo and Oyam districts on August 26, 2021. The equipment delivered are to be utilized by scouts to scare elephants from peoples’ gardens to reduce incidences of crop raiding. The equipment were delivered in presence of local leaders including Local Council 1s, Local Council IIIs, Sub County Chiefs/ Senior Accounts Secretaries, Community Wildlife Scouts, Uganda Wildlife Authority Staff from Karuma Wildlife Reserve including Warden Community Conservation and Community Conservation Ranger and Wildlife Conservation Society Staff.

The local leaders, UWA staff and Community Wildlife Scouts appreciated WCS for procuring and delivering the equipment.

**Table 3: Equipment bought and delivered to community wildlife Scouts**

S. No	Item	Quantity delivered
1	Matchboxes	30 cartons
2	Batteries size D	48 Boxes
3	Catapults	50 pieces
4	Torches	50 pieces



**Scouts, Local Leaders, UWA and WCS Staff in a meeting to Receive equipment for Community Wildlife Scouts at Nyamahasa**



**Parish Chief Juma Parish handing over Items for Community Wildlife Scouts to Chairperson Scouts Juma**



**L.C. III. Diima handing over items for Community Wildlife Scouts at Diima Sub County**





**WCS Staff Handing over torches to Scouts in Diima Parish, Diima Sub County – Kiryandongo District**

**Conducted Community Conservation and awareness creation meetings held at Ishasha sector in Queen Elizabeth National Conservation Area.**

Following the killing of 6 female adult lions in March 2021 at Ishasha sector in Queen Elizabeth Conservation Area, WCS organised and conducted community conservation and awareness creation village meetings in 8 selected parishes of Nyanga Sub County in Kanungu district and Bwambara Sub County in Rukungiri districts. In Bwambara, the awareness and sensitization meetings were held in Kikarara, Bwambara and Nyabubare parishes while in Nyanga the meetings were held in Bukorwe Parish. This activity was jointly implemented by WCS, UWA, local politicians and technical sub-county local government staff represented by Community Development Officer (CDO). The meetings were attended by 547 (260 females and 287 males) community members. The key message in the awareness meetings was to encourage local people to support conservation of wildlife by supporting activities supported by WCS and its partners.

During the meeting, WCS field staff highlighted activities that supported by WCS and its partners. These included the following: trench excavation and maintenance, livestock screening and vaccination, livestock loss and crop raiding monitoring and data recording, sensitization, rapid response to lion attacks, construction of demo Bomas and supporting communities to construct them on their own, de-snaring in the park, and supporting UWA patrols to combat wildlife crime. These activities have promoted conservation of wildlife and contributed to the improvement of livelihoods of the local communities. The community members were encouraged to continue supporting the highlighted activities to reduce human wildlife conflicts and improve on their livelihoods.



**Photos taken during the awareness meetings**

**4.6: Document, print and share project technical reports and success stories (inception, baseline of IWT/CWT crime data, WCU's and NWCCTF needs assessment, National strategy to combat wildlife crime, training reports, mid-term project review and end of project report)**

WCS supported NWCCTF to deliver to all the 13 NWCCTF Institutions the awareness materials developed and printed in year two of this project implementation. The awareness materials included the taskforce progress report of 2018 – 2020, brochure and the indoor signage. All these materials were with the objective of increasing awareness of the NWCCTF and its achievements to the heads of the taskforce institutions to secure their full commitment and support; and the general public.



**Indoor signage installed at UCAA and CDF Mubuya UPDF Barracks**

**2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments/lessons learnt that the project has encountered over the last 6 months (for COVID-19 specific delays/problems, please use 2b). Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.**

There are limited funds to support the training of UWA Senior and Top Management Staff in Intelligence. This category of staff are the consumers of intelligence information expected to give guidance/command on how operations should be executed after receiving classified intelligence reports, it became a challenge after training 50% of the Junior and Middle cadre officers in intelligence and could not afford to train their supervisors. It is important to note that this will not have a significant effect to the project budget and timetable because WCS has been able to allocate some funds from USAID/Uganda Combating Wildlife Crime Activity to support for training around 25 senior and top management staff. Most CWT activities, like combating armed poaching, require continued funding to maintain pressure on wildlife offenders to realise the intended results. This is proving challenging for WCS before identifying some funds to support the key activities after the project time in March 2022. This is trickier with the dwindling revenue collected by UWA from limited number of visitors. There are limited funds to carry out an independent investigation of the illegal entry of guns from DR Congo and Southern Sudan, which are used for armed poaching around MFPA. The high cost of investment and limited funds to invest in sustainable livelihood enterprises will create alternative sources of income for the frontline communities mostly affected by wildlife to divert pressure from wildlife and win their support towards conservation of wildlife.

**2b. Please outline any specific issues which your project has encountered as a result of COVID-19. Where you have adapted your project activities in response to the pandemic, please briefly outline how you have done so here. Explain what residual impact there may be on your project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.**

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the government of Uganda to take drastic measures like total lock down of businesses, public transport and offices among others to enforce the Ministry of Health standard operating procedures (SoPs), guidelines, and Presidential directives. The effect to project implementation included the following: the banning of public gathering and meetings affected NWCCTF quarterly meetings where the taskforce members plan, develop intelligence targets, give progress on work done and discuss activities, work plans and budgets for the next quarter. The quarterly meeting for the month of June 2021 was not held and as a result very few activities were executed by the taskforce. Community mobilisation and awareness meetings, anti-poaching campaigns, community trainings in livelihood enterprise development were equally disrupted. COVID-19 also increased the cost of operations: for example, during the de-snaring mission in MFNP we had to fuel a second UWA vehicle to support deployment of rangers during operations. We had to face the same in QENP. Before COVID-19, the rangers were deployed using one vehicle. The closing of tourism activities, local businesses (e.g., restaurants), and local transport (e.g., boda bodas) led to an increase in poverty in communities adjacent to national parks and wildlife reserves, resulting in increased poaching and other wildlife related crime including armed poaching. This problem was worsened by the declining revenue collected by UWA, which could not support increased number of law enforcement operations to combat wildlife crime. WCS adapted to COVID-19 through the following ways to ensure continuity of some project activities: requested support letter from UWA as an implementing partners and beneficiary of the project, to secure some movement permits that allowed some of our vehicles to move to protected areas. This enabled us to conduct the de-snaring mission in MFNP and QENP in the month of July 2021. WCS also adapted by permitting staff to work from home during the total lockdown. Some project activities were coordinated through team and Zoom virtual meetings. It is important to note that as much as this initiative helped in making some progress on project activities, it also came with an increase in the cost for airtime and internet.

WCS adapted by implementing some field and office activities by enforcing its approved COVID-19, health and safety guidelines and SoPs. WCS responded by testing and immunising its staff before they were permitted to interact with communities to avoid risks of affecting and being affected by COVID-19. The institution also supported the treatment of those who tested positive for COVID-19.

**2c. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?**

Discussed with LTS: Yes/No

Formal change request submitted: Yes/No

Received confirmation of change acceptance Yes/No

**3a. Do you currently expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?**

Yes  **No**  Estimated underspend: £

**3b. If yes, then you need to consider your project budget needs carefully.** Please remember that any funds agreed for this financial year are only available to the project in this financial year.

**If you anticipate a significant underspend because of justifiable changes within the project, please submit a rebudget Change Request as soon as possible. There is no guarantee that Defra will agree a rebudget so please ensure you have enough time to make appropriate changes if necessary. Please DO NOT send these in the same email as your report.**

**4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's**

**management, monitoring, or financial procedures?**

The funds meant for salaries for the project staff have been overspent but we still have funds to implement project activities until end of the project in March 2022. We are requesting permission to relocate some funds from the operation budget to cater for salaries for project staff.

**If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.**

**Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan can be discussed in this report but **should also** be raised with LTS International through a Change Request. **Please DO NOT send these in the same email.****

Please send your **completed report by email** to [IWT-Fund@ltsi.co.uk](mailto:IWT-Fund@ltsi.co.uk). The report should be between 2-3 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message e.g. Subject: IWT001 Half Year Report.**