

Project Update: November 2021

The project implementation started in September 2021 and during this period we conducted four main activities, as follows.

- Training of community-based field assistants.
- Meeting five households for pre-visit evaluation on the background of the wetland and shoebills such as ecology, population size, breeding, etc.
- Direct observation by going around the wetland to assess the land use/cover system.
- Conducting awareness meeting with key stakeholders and local community members.

The team paid a visit to the local area chairperson to introduce the project and methods involved for data collection and monitoring. We explained to the chairperson the objectives of the project and importance of community members to participate fully. We described the agenda for the participatory rural appraisal in detail and agreed on time scheduled based on the convenience to community members. The chairperson identified three community-based field assistants that were later trained in wildlife data collection and monitoring, especially shoebills, and equipped with protective gear. The monitoring is done twice every week for 3 months.

Training community-based field assistants

The team conducted a 5-day training session from 27th October to 1st November 2021 with the three community-based field assistants to equip them with knowledge on behaviors, ecology, distribution, habitat and diet of wildlife especially the shoebill.



Photo 1. Ornithologist conducting knowledge sharing among the community-based field assistants during the training session

Pre-visit evaluation on the background of the wetland and Shoebills

During the pre-visit evaluation we invited five local community members (men and women all over 50) to share their local experience, history and background for Lutembe wetland as a habitat to wildlife and general information on shoebill ecology and population size.

We interviewed the elders on what benefits they derive from the wetland, what causes wetland degradation and their impacts, and how was Lutembe wetland before and between 1995 to 2020.



Photo 2. Community elders sharing the background and history of the wetland and shoebill bird

YEAR	EVENTS
1970	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Abundance in wildlife around the Lutembe wetland. Significant was the Lutembe crocodile, hippos, and fish and abundance of birds in the area.- Abundance of fish at lutembe wetland.- Reported sighting of the shoe billed stock, "Bulwe" as it's locally known.
Late 1970	Shooting of the Lutembe crocodile and last sighting of this crocodile
1980	Confiscation of the shoe billed stock from some villagers, who wanted to sale them. The shoe billed stock was taken to the Uganda Wildlife Education Center.
1990	Establishment of the flower farms at Lutembe wetland. The flower farms have increased from about 2acreas to now almost 10 acres of the wetland.
2000	Increasing settlement of people and activities in the wetland for agriculture, sand mining, dumping of wastes and flower factory.
2019-20	Last sighting of the shoebill stock by a one white lady

Direct observation by going around the wetland

The team went around the wetland to identify land use, but also align what was mentioned in the pre-visit evaluation meeting to what is visible on ground. The wetland settlement, industrialisation, agriculture and sand mining is clearly seen on the transect walk. All these have a direct or indirect impact on the habitat of the shoebill.



Photo 3. Team carrying out direct observation on the wetland to identify the land use/cover system

Conducting awareness meeting

During the awareness meeting with local community members and stakeholders, topics such as importance of the wetland, what causes wetland degradation, what challenges affecting the wetland, how to sustainably use the wetland and how to partner and collaborate with other stakeholders in managing the wetland were discussed. The meeting was carried out in group discussions and presentations facilitated by natural resource officer- Entebbe municipality, chairperson of the Lutembe Wetland Users Association and the projector coordinator. During the discussion session the participants/attendees were divided into two groups each with 10 local community members.

Participatory Rural Appraisal meeting

The team considered the principles of participatory rural appraisal including listening and learning, offsetting biases, utilization of precious community time, seeking diversity, triangulation/cross checking, optimal ignorance and appropriate imprecision and multi-disciplinary team.



Photo 4. Project coordinator in a group discussion during an awareness meeting with local community members

Tools used

a) Village transect

A village transect walk was drawn to identify land use but also align what was discussed in the groups to what is visible on ground. The wetland, settlement and sand mining is clearly seen on the transect walk. All these have a direct or indirect impact on the habitat of the shoebill.

b) Resource map

The participants were put into two groups, and each was requested to draw a resource map. The members were requested to draw their village and include all resources found in the village. The resource map helped the team to identify important resources in the village but also provide a perspective of how and what the community members attached importance to the wetland.

c) Brainstorming

The community members were briefed on the project and requested to brainstorm the major challenges affecting the wetland. The discussion also included the correlation between the wetland as a habitat for the shoebill. A majority of the participants had been in the area for more than 10 years. Major challenges mentioned included: agriculture, waste management, sand mining, and settlement in wetland, hunting, poor fishing methods, blasting of stones in nearby quarry, flower farm.



Photo 5. Representatives from Group 1 and 2 Showing the resource maps developed by their members

d) Problem Ranking

	Sand mining	Waste Mgt	Flower farm	Poor fishing	Settlement	Agriculture	Cutting trees	hunting
Sand mining								
Waste Mgt								
Flower farm								
Poor fishing								
Settlement								
Agriculture								
Cutting trees								
Hunting								

e) Community Action Plan

This is a framework for implementing sustainable activities of the wetland as a habitat for the shoebill that was decided by the community members participating in the meeting.

What	Who	Where	How	When	Cost	Expected results
Waste mgt	Chairpers on LWUA and Youth leader	Lutembe Wetland Users Association	-awareness -recycling - investigative journalism -community mobilization	December 2021	\$1500	Reduction in wetland pollution
Sand mining	Chairpers on Lutembe village	Lutembe Wetland Users Association	-Setting by-laws	December 2021	-	Wetland restoration
Hunting	Fellow hunter, traditional healers	Lutembe Wetland Users Association	Training on dangers of poor methods of hunting	November 2021	-	Increase in wildlife population
Flower farm	Politicians	Entebbe Municipality	Investigative journalism	November /December 2021	\$1500	Reduction in wetland degradation and pollution

This is a community action plan developed during the participatory rural appraisal meeting as a road map for implementing community change in wetland management, where the local community members clarified on what will be done, who will do it and how it will be done to protect the wetland.