



REPORT FROM OUR VISIT TO MT. ELGON NATIONAL PARK IN KWEEN DISTRICT NORTH EASTERN UGANDA

On Monday, 25th September 2025, a team from Avian Conservation Uganda Society (ACUS) and Tribe 256 traveled to Kween District in northeastern Uganda, along the slopes of Mt. Elgon. The primary goal for ACUS was to conduct excursions and engage the local communities in sensitization sessions about bird conservation and protection.

The journey started at around 10:00 a.m. from Kampala, and we reached Kapchorwa District at around 6:00 p.m. From Kapchorwa, we branched off to a secondary school where we left the car and continued the journey on motorbikes.

The roads in this area are in poor condition, and the terrain is hilly with steep slopes. The motorbikes took us about 15 km into Kween District, but we eventually reached a point where they could not proceed. From there, we walked while carrying our bags to Okurut Village, where we were supposed to camp. The walk covered about 6 km along small footpaths in the hills, crossing streams and slippery valleys.

At around 9:00 p.m., we arrived at Okurut Village, where we were warmly welcomed by Meshiak and Faith. Our accommodation and supper were already prepared, and after having dinner, we retired for the night

Day 1, 26th September 2025

We woke up early in the morning for birding around Kere Stream, where we spotted many species, including some rare ones. The following is the checklist.

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20 Species



1	Augur Buzzard	
6	Speckled Mousebird	
1	Crowned Hornbill	
2	Taita Fiscal	
1	White-bellied Tit	
3	African Yellow-Warbler	
3	Mountain Yellow-Warbler	
1	Wire-tailed Swallow	
2	Green White-eye	
2	Red-winged Starling	
3	African Gray Flycatcher	
2	White-eyed Slaty-Flycatcher	
1	Little Rock-Thrush	
2	Tacazze Sunbird	

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1	Little Rock-Thrush	
2	Tacazze Sunbird	
2	Northern Double-collared Sunbird	
2	Black-headed Waxbill	
1	Crimson-rumped Waxbill	
4	House Sparrow	
2	Northern Gray-headed Sparrow	
1	African Pipit	

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Fig. 1 shows a crowned hornbill.

After birding, we returned to our camp for refreshments and lunch as we prepared for the evening excursion. We started the evening excursion on the slopes of Mt. Elgon, though it was interrupted by rain. However, we were able to spot several unique and rare species.

Checklist

1. Peregrine Falcon
2. Common Bulbul
3. Black Saw-wing

4. Pin-tailed Whydah
5. African Pipit
6. African Thrush
7. White-bellied Canary
8. Yellow-rumped Seedeater
9. Rwenzori Double-collared Sunbird
10. Foxy Cisticola
11. African Pied Wagtail

After the excursion, we returned to camp. The temperature had dropped significantly due to the high altitude of about 3,500 ft.

Day 2, 27th September 2025

We woke up early in the morning for another birding excursion, this time in the buffer zone of Mt. Elgon National Park, where we spotted additional bird species along Kere Stream.

Checklist

1. Slate-colored Boubou
2. Olive Pigeon
3. Nyanza Swift
4. Lesser Grey Shrike
5. Hartlaub's Turaco
6. Marico Sunbird
7. Streaky Seedeater
8. Little Rock Thrush
9. Mouse-colored Penduline Tit
10. Mottled Swift
11. Grey-headed Bush-shrike
12. Amethyst Sunbird
13. Marico Sunbird



The famous Hartlaubs' turaco

After this excursion, we went for lunch as we prepared for the community sensitization session. Meshiak mobilized the community members, who gathered at the trading center to meet us

Community Sensitization

The engagement started at 4:00 p.m. with the following agenda:

1. Introduction from Avian Members and Tribe 256
2. Welcome speech from the LC1 Chairperson
3. Welcome speech from the hosts (Hildah and Meshiak)
4. Speech from the Conservation Manager
5. Reactions from the community members

6. Closing remarks from the Executive Director of ACUS

The LC1 Chairperson welcomed us and expressed gratitude to Meshiak for inviting us to visit the area. After introductions, the conservation manager presented the following points:

- Introduction to Avian Conservation Uganda
- The organization's mission and vision
- An overview of our work and methodology
- Purpose of visiting the area
- Importance of birds and their ecological roles
- Request for community input on their views and experiences with birds

Community Reactions

- Some birds are beneficial, while others are pests that destroy crops or prey on poultry.
- Certain birds have cultural significance, e.g., owls are believed to signify death.
- Vultures help manage waste by consuming carcasses.
- Hartlaub's Turaco is used as a natural indicator of time.
- Honeyguides are valued for leading people to sources of wild honey.

The Conservation Manager acknowledged all contributions and highlighted additional roles of birds, such as pollination, seed dispersal, pest control, and ecosystem balance. He encouraged the formation of a birding club to promote conservation, ecotourism, and local development through tourism, education, and employment opportunities

Remarks from the Executive Director

The ED of ACUS emphasized the benefits of establishing a birding club, including:

- Enhancing bird identification skills
- Promoting ecological awareness and education
- Encouraging writing and documentation of bird species
- Creating opportunities for tourism and income generation



Fig 3 shows the E.D ACUS showing bird pictures to some members of the community

He pledged technical support, books, and equipment to facilitate the club's formation and sustainability. Community members expressed enthusiasm and promised to encourage their children to join.

Additional Activities

After the session, we visited Mukuuso Cave, one of Uganda's largest caves, featuring breathtaking scenery and waterfalls.



Fig. 4 shows the beautiful scenery of Mukuuso Cave.

Departure

On the following day, we began our return journey. Due to heavy rains, road conditions had worsened, and motorbikes could not be used. We had to walk approximately 20 km back to the trading center, where we had left our car, before proceeding back to Kampala.