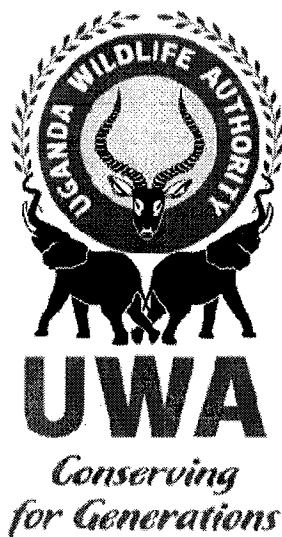


UGANDA WILDLIFE AUTHORITY



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

REVISED FEBRUARY 2024

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## **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. Nkuringo VIC
  - 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)
- iv) Other locations may be opened and will be communicated by UWA management from time to time
- v) Persons found tracking in undesignated entry points, without UWA guides and without authentic permits and proof of payments shall be arrested and prosecuted.

## 5. TRACKING AND VIEWING TIME LIMIT

**Tracking time** for the gorillas and chimpanzees includes the whole experience starting immediately after the briefing up to the time of return for the debrief.

**Viewing time** refers to the duration the visitors stay with the primates after encounter. The viewing time shall commence from the time the visitors reach the gorillas or chimpanzees

- i) Tracking of gorillas and chimpanzees shall be done within the timelines stated hereunder;
  - a) Gorilla Tracking - From 8:00am to the time when visitors return to briefing location for debrief.
  - b) Gorilla habituation Experience - From 6.30am to the time when the visitors return to the briefing location for debrief.
  - c) Chimpanzee tracking - From 8.00am (for morning tracking) and 2.00pm (for afternoon tracking) to the time that the visitors return to briefing location for debrief.
  - d) Chimpanzee habituation experience - From 6.30 am to the time when the visitors return to briefing location for debrief.
- ii) The viewing time for gorillas and chimpanzees shall be as follows:
  - a) A maximum of one (1) hour viewing for normal tracking of both gorillas and chimpanzees
  - b) A maximum of four (4) hours for the gorilla and the Chimpanzee habituation experience.
  - c) Any other duration that Management may from time to time authorize in writing.
- iii) Visitors shall be required to follow the UWA tracking Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs), which may be revised from time to time. UWA staff shall be required to enforce these SoPs.

## 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.
- iii) Foreign Residents may purchase up to 5 Permits for any trip only for their family members that are resident in any of the EAC states. Family members not resident in EAC states will be treated as FNR as per the FNR guidelines
- iv) EAC citizens may also purchase gorilla and chimpanzee tracking Permits for their family members. However, these Permits cannot be changed to FR or FNR permits. Therefore, UWA shall not accept any top up from EAC to FR/FNR
- v) Reservations for gorilla and chimpanzee tracking shall be done online (when applicable) or from any of the following locations:
  - The Reservations Office at the UWA Headquarters in Kampala for both mountain gorillas and chimpanzees.
  - The Kampala Tourism Information Center at Sheraton for both mountain gorillas and chimpanzees
  - Any other location as may be determined and officially communicated to the stakeholder by only the Executive Director from time to time.

## **9. CATEGORIES OF PERMITS**

- i) Normal permit; these are permits purchased as per the prevailing tariff and to be utilized normally as per the different activity rules.
- ii) Complimentary permits; these are permits offered at no cost to selected government officials/entities, private sector institutions and private individuals for marketing and promotional purposes.
- iii) Promotional permits; these are permits offered under promotional marketing/sales campaigns to increase sales. These may also include discounted permits issued to individuals and institutions on a case by case basis
- iv) Commission permits; these are permits offered as bonus to tour operators and tourism associations for achieving set sales targets by UWA in a given period.

**NOTE:** All categories of permits shall be issued subject to availability of tracking slots on the day and location of tracking

## **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.
- If there is availability, the tour operator or client shall instruct the UWA sales executive to reserve the permits in the UWA booking system.
- A proforma invoice will be issued by UWA as confirmation of the client's reservation of the gorilla and chimpanzee tracking services.
- The reservation is valid for 7 days without payment. To secure and guarantee the reservation, the tour operator (client) must within this 7-day period pay the total invoiced funds to UWA bank accounts using allowable payment methods listed in (11) below. Failure to do so will result in the reservation being released back to the market for sale to other interested parties

### **b) ONLINE RESERVATION AND PAYMENT:**

- UWA will effect online reservations and payment modules subject to a robust and secure system being developed by UWA that ensures integrity of the permit guidelines and security of clients' money.
- This will be communicated by UWA once ready and where any changes are made to the system, specifically relating to this online payments module, be duly communicated.
- UWA will train eligible operators on how they can use the booking system to reserve and pay for available permits

- 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 he 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
- e) All bank charges and related fees will be borne by the tour operator or visitor. For avoidance of doubt, the total invoice amount is what should reflect in the UWA bank accounts as monies received
- f) Once verification is done, permits will then be issued and a receipt generated for the tour operator or client
- g) UWA shall officially provide the bank account on which all sales will be deposited

iv) **Mobile Money merchant payments**

- a) Currently UWA accepts MTN MOMO Pay and Airtel Money Pay. However, new providers may be accepted in future



- 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 permits shall be paid for using the mobile money options provided for only the Kampala locations indicated in 8(v) above
- e) Upon invoicing by the UWA staff, the tour operator / client will be required to initiate a payment on his / her phone using the process below
  - **AIRTEL MONEY:** By dialing \*185\*9# on Airtel then entering the Merchant ID displayed at each gate.
  - **MTN MOMO:** By dialing \*165\*3# on Airtel then entering the Merchant ID displayed at each gate.
- v) Any other payment method as UWA may determine and communicate from time to time.

**NOTE:** UWA does not have any agents within and outside Uganda. All payments should be made directly to the UWA bank accounts through the various payment modes indicated above.

**NOTE:** All payments gorilla and chimpanzee tracking have to be made through the Headquarters in Kampala

## 12. ISSUANCE OF PERMITS AND UPDATE OF VISITORS' DETAILS

- i) Upon payment, an automatically generated receipt will be issued and sent to the client's official email
- ii) In the case of gorilla and chimpanzee tracking, the client shall be required to update the permit with the visitors' bio data prior to the tracking date if the same was not captured at the time of reservations
- iii) The tour operator or client will be required to pick the permit from the UWA offices, however, depending on the system that UWA is using at the time, the tour operator or client may be able to print out their permit directly from the email sent to them


### 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 and trackers and subject to the gorilla and chimpanzee tracking SoPs
- e) Tracking without a guide and validated documents shall not be allowed and visitors or tour operators found contravention shall be held liable.

### 14. RESCHEDULE OF PERMITS

A **reschedule** refers to change of dates and/or locations for tracking as provided for in these guidelines.

- i) A client may be allowed up to two reschedules for one specific permit. Under no circumstances will a reschedule be accepted beyond the second reschedule
- ii) A reschedule shall only be accepted subject to availability of space for the specific location and date requested
- iii) Where reschedules have been permitted, the first reschedule shall only be made once at no cost subject to availability.
- iv) The second reschedule will be subject to a surcharge of 25% of the total cost of a permit subject to availability
- v) If reschedule is done twice, both the new tracking dates for all rescheduled permits shall not exceed twelve months from the initial booked tracking date.
- vi) Where a permit has been rescheduled before, no refund shall be permitted against such a permit.
- vii) In the event that the permit is rescheduled to a period with a higher price, a top-up shall be made to cover the difference as per prevailing tariff.
- viii) Requests for reschedules should be received not less than fourteen (14) days to the tracking date. Any requests received less than fourteen days to the tracking date shall be accepted and processed based on availability of space on specific dates and respective sites and shall attract a surcharge of 25% of the cost of a permit.




- 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 procedure for cancellation or refund:

- a) The tour operator / client will request cancellation or a refund in writing to the Executive Director
- b) The Executive Director may, upon receiving the request, authorize or reject the cancellation or refund of a fully paid permit on the following terms:
  - i) Where the client, upon tracking for a whole day, fails to see gorillas or chimpanzees, the Executive Director may authorize rescheduling of the permit to the following day.
  - ii) Where there are no available slots for rescheduling the permit or where the client's itinerary may not permit them to stay a day longer, the Executive Director shall authorize cancellation of the permit and a refund of 60% of the permit value upon certification/confirmation of the inability to access gorillas/chimpanzees by the respective Chief Warden/ Warden in Charge. This refund will be less any incidental costs (taxes and bank charges) already incurred by UWA
  - iii) A visitor who may develop or shows signs of illness before tracking shall not be allowed to visit the gorillas or chimpanzees. Such a client shall be referred to the nearest health facility to ascertain the extent of his illness and his inability to track.
  - iv) The illness shall be confirmed by a medical report. The cost of diagnosis shall be borne by the client.
  - v) The Executive Director may authorize cancellation of the permit and processing of a refund of 50% of the permit value to a visitor declared unfit

- 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 tracking. This refund will be less any incidental costs (taxes and bank charges) already incurred by UWA.
- c) In the event of double payment for an activity, the Executive Director may authorize a full refund to a client that presents evidence of a double payment
- d) The Executive Director may authorize cancellation of a permit for other reasons, other than those specified above on the following conditions;
- i) Any request for cancellation within fourteen (14) days to the tracking date, shall attract no refunds.
  - ii) A client that requests for cancellation of a permit between fifteen (15) to forty-five (45) days to the tracking date shall be entitled to 25% of the monies paid less incidental costs (bank charges and government taxes and any other as may be determined from time to time) already incurred by UWA.
  - iii) A client that requests for cancellation of a permit between forty-six (46) to sixty (60) days to the tracking date shall be entitled to 50% of the monies paid less any incidental costs already incurred by UWA.
  - iv) A client that requests for cancellation of a permit sixty-one (61) days and more to the tracking date shall be entitled to 75% of the monies paid less any incidental costs already incurred by UWA.
- e) **Advance payments made for entrance and other park activities shall not be eligible for rescheduling, cancellation and refund except for Gorilla and Chimpanzee tracking.**
- f) All payments to UWA Bank Accounts shall be based on assessment and invoices issued by UWA. Bank transfers not based on an assessment and invoice shall not be acceptable nor refundable.
- g) Funds paid for an activity shall not be transferred or utilized for another activity.
- h) While considering any request for cancellation of a permit, the Executive Director shall consider the date of receipt of the request as the date of cancellation for purposes of determining the refund.



## **16. AMENDMENT**

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