



9th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

Wetlands and Water: supporting life, sustaining livelihoods
Kampala, Uganda, 8-15 November 2005

Excursions organised for Sunday, 13 November 2005

On Sunday 13 November 2005, there are no scheduled work sessions as the Secretariat prepares final versions of the draft Resolutions, and delegates will be free to visit one or more places of interest, including Ramsar sites and potential sites to be included in the Ramsar list of Wetlands of International Importance.

As the time of the COP approaches, more information about these excursions, including registration forms, maps, itineraries and points of interest, will be available on the Wetlands Inspection Division Web site: <http://www.ugandawetlands.org/cop9>. Below is a brief description of some of the sites to be visited.

1. **Nakivubo wetland**, the floodplain for the main storm water channel draining the city of Kampala, is on the fringes of Lake Victoria in Murchison Bay. Nakivubo wetland plays an important role in tertiary treatment of waste water and purification of storm water, thereby maintaining water quality in the bay that supplies piped water to the city. The wetland has come under great pressure and is heavily encroached upon by coco yam cultivation and human settlements. This was the first **wetland reserve** to be gazetted in Uganda.
2. **Mabamba Bay** is an extensive marsh fringed with papyrus near the main body of Lake Victoria. This is the closest site to Kampala with Shoebill and Papyrus Gonolek. Migrant species such as Gull-billed Terns, Grey-headed Gulls, White-winged Terns and Blue Swallows are also present. The site also harbours Lake Victoria biome-restricted species and congregations. Community ecotourism is practised at this proposed Ramsar site.
3. **Lutembe Bay** is a marshy area on Lake Victoria that is home to Lake Victoria biome-restricted species and large congregations of migratory birds. It has at times been recorded to host probably the entire global population of the White-winged Black Tern and significant populations of Gull-billed Terns and Slender-billed Gulls. The site is also important for globally threatened species such as the Shoebill, Papyrus Gonolek, and Papyrus Yellow Warbler, and is a proposed Ramsar site.
4. **Nabugabo Ramsar site, Masaka**, is a freshwater lake beside Lake Victoria surrounded by different types of wetland ecosystems and is an Important Bird Area with several bird species of conservation concern. Over 180 bird species are recorded in the area, including globally threatened species of Great Snipe and Pallid Harrier. The area also supports high diversity of plants, including insectivorous species of the family Droseraceae. Lake Nabugabo is Uganda's second Ramsar Site, with beautiful scenery and unique fish and plant species of conservation concern. The excursion will also cover **Nabajjuzi wetland**, an extensive permanent swamp supporting Shoebill, Grey-crowned Crane and Papyrus Gonolek. The site is also famous for sitatunga antelope and serves as a water supply for

Masaka town. The tour will conclude with a visit to **Kyojja wetlands**, which is an example of a community dependent on wetland crafts and demonstrates sustainable use of wetland products.

5. **Sango Bay** is an extensive mosaic of wetland types which include swamp forest, papyrus swamps, herbaceous swamps and seasonally flooded grasslands. The area is on the fringes of Lake Victoria and contains 30 species of highland-type trees, 65 species of mammals, 417 species of birds, and congregations of migratory birds. The area is considered of biogeographic interest because it lies in the transition between East and West African vegetation zones and has evidence of a Pleistocene refugium. This tour will also cover the spectacular **Musambwa Island** which consists of three very small rocky islands covering an area of about nine hectares. The islands support four migratory species of birds that breed in internationally significant numbers, including the African race of the Grey-headed Gull, the Long-tailed Cormorant, Greater Cormorant, and the Little Egret. It is an Important Bird Area with several bird species of conservation concern.
6. **Lake Mburo National Park, Mbarara**, is a typical savannah woodland/grassland with 68 species of large mammals, of which 16 are wild ungulates (e.g., eland, impala, buffalo, antelope, zebra). The park has diverse bird fauna, with over 310 species recorded. The site is important for Lake Victoria biome-restricted species such as White-winged Warbler and Carruthers's Cisticola, which are rare in other IBAs.
7. **Mabira Forest Reserve** is the largest block of moist semi-deciduous forest remaining in central Uganda. There are 75 Guinea-Congo forest biome species, many of which are not well represented in other forest reserves in the country. This is a good site for nature walks and has an ecotourism and picnic site. This will be followed by a visit to the **Source of the Nile, Jinja**, and the point where the River Nile, the longest river in Africa, flows out of Lake Victoria, which has been a site of great historical interest for explorers. The excursion will conclude with a visit to **Bujagali Falls, Jinja**, one of the many falls and rapids along the River Nile, famous for white-water rafting.