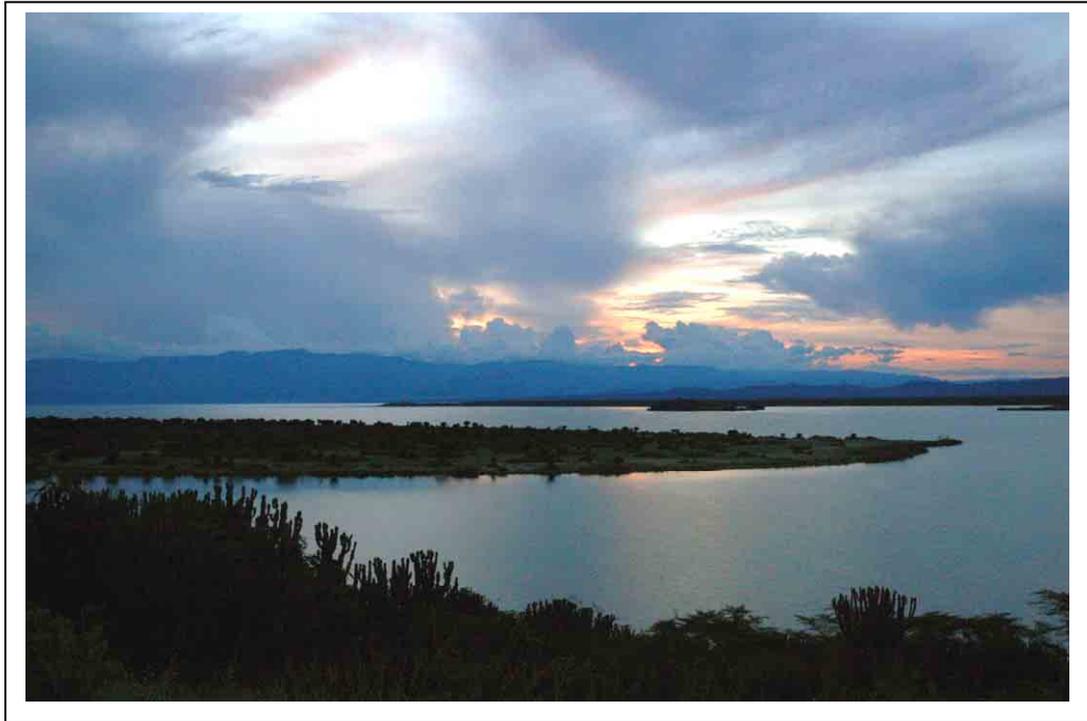


Attractions of Queen Elizabeth National Park: Perceptions about development of a golf course



Sunset over Mweya Peninsula, one of the proposed sites for a golf course

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July 2006

Executive Summary

There has been a heated debate in the Uganda Press recently about proposals by the Madhvani Group, who own and manage Mweya Safari Lodge, to develop a golf course on Mweya Peninsula. Their stated aims for such a course are that it would increase the number of tourists that visit Mweya Safari Lodge and also increase the time they would spend at the lodge, and thereby increase the hotel occupancy rate from a current 58%. Much of the debate in the press has had few hard facts associated with it, but has primarily been between the Madhvani Group and its supporters who favour a golf course and the environmentalists and other associated groups who think it would ruin Mweya Peninsula.

There was therefore a need to undertake a study to assess why tourists come to Queen Elizabeth National Park, what they want/hope to see and how they would perceive the building of a golf course on the peninsula or at another proposed site at Katwe fishing village. This survey was made by the Wildlife Conservation Society with help from Uganda Wildlife Authority staff, of 299 visitors visiting Queen Elizabeth National Park between April and July 2006.

Not surprisingly, most tourists (55.5%) come to Queen Elizabeth to see wildlife. However another 44.5% state that they value the scenery as well as the wildlife and the whole atmosphere of Mweya Peninsula. Of the visitors who stayed at Mweya Safari Lodge, significantly more preferred this aspect of scenery and atmosphere and this was equally important as the wildlife in the park to these visitors. Large cats (lion and leopard) were the preferred animal that visitors hoped to see and a large proportion of visitors (37.7%) would want to see the park entry fees reduced if these large cats were not to be seen.

When asked about the plans for the golf course, 59.6% of people stated that this would make them *less* likely to visit the park and 58.8% stated that this would make them *less* likely to visit Mweya Safari Lodge. Only 7.7% of respondents stated that it would make them *more* likely to visit the park and 8.4% stated they would be *more* likely to stay at Mweya Safari Lodge. The remaining people stated that it would not affect their decision to visit the park/lodge or not. The percentages increased slightly when only the visitors staying at Mweya Safari Lodge were analysed with 63.1% and 63.9% stating that they would be less likely to visit the park and stay at Mweya Safari Lodge respectively. There were differences between different groups of people with people from the Far East and East Africa more likely to want to have a golf course in the park than North Americans, Europeans and Australian/New Zealanders, however even in these groups the majority of respondents stated they would be less likely to visit or it wouldn't affect their decision about whether to visit the park if a golf course was built.

It is clear therefore that if a golf course was to be constructed on Mweya Peninsula a totally different clientele would need to be attracted to the park. Several respondents admitted to being golfers but stated that they would not want to play golf in the park because they wouldn't come to a national park to play golf. In fact 23.7% of respondents added very vociferous statements (totally unprompted) against the idea of a golf course on their questionnaire sheets while nobody was strongly supportive of a course. Mweya Safari Lodge could therefore lose visitors, particularly with the increase in other possibilities for accommodation that are being developed in and around the park, if they build a golf course but it is very unclear whether they could offset the loss with a different group of customers. Given the costs of establishing and maintaining a golf course they would need to be very certain they could attract enough people who would want to play golf. Uganda Wildlife Authority would need to be certain that these visitors could be attracted, because a drop in tourism would affect their income also.

Acknowledgements

This short research project was supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Daniel K. Thorne Foundation. We are very grateful to the staff of Uganda Wildlife Authority who asked tourists to complete the questionnaires, particularly those on the launch, at the visitors centre and at the gates at Katunguru and Kabatoro. We are also grateful for the permission of UWA to undertake this research project in the park and to the help of the senior management in ensuring that their staff handed out the questionnaires (Particularly Tom Okello and Aggrey Rwetsiba).

We are also grateful to Tom Ofungi at Tourism Uganda for providing data on number of visitors to Uganda.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Acknowledgements	3
Table of Contents	3
Introduction	4
Questionnaire survey design and implementation.....	5
Results	6
Sample size and distribution	6
Visiting frequency	7
What attracts visitors to Queen Elizabeth National Park?.....	7
Wildlife Tourists want to see	8
Entry fees and changes if animals become too rare in the park	9
Reaction to plans for developing a golf course	10
Questionnaire survey of Tour Operators.....	12
Conclusions.....	13
Visitors to Queen Elizabeth National Park	13
Attractions for visitors and golf.....	14
Attracting Asians and people from the Middle East	14
Costs of establishing and maintaining a golf course at Mweya.....	15
Conservation of large predators in Queen Elizabeth National Park.....	15
Options for Mweya Safari Lodge to increase visitors/revenue	16
References.....	18
Appendices	19

Introduction

Several articles in the Uganda Press, particularly *The New Vision* newspaper, have recently been attacking or defending a proposal by MARASA Holdings, owned by the Madhvani Group, to develop a golf course in Queen Elizabeth National Park. These articles have primarily put the case that creating a golf course would either increase visitors to the park and enhance the international status of Mweya Safari Lodge by making it a premier tourist destination (eg. Rutega, April 26, 2006) or alternatively it would ruin the nature of Mweya Peninsula, harm wildlife and deter tourists from visiting the park (eg. Mugisha, April 21st 2006; Nagenda, April 29, 2006). There were few actual data presented by either side to support their arguments, however, with the result that the argument remains very inconclusive.

Golf courses have typically been seen as having negative impacts on the environment. They require a lot of water to maintain the greens and a large quantity of pesticides, herbicides and fungicides to ensure that the grass species that make the best fairways and greens are maintained. More pesticides are used per hectare than typical agricultural applications, and average about 1000 times the amounts applied to farmland in the USA (Cox, 1991). A survey in 1994 in the USA showed that golf course superintendents were more likely to die of cancer, particularly brain tumours and non-Hodgkins lymphoma. These results were similar to study of people who apply pesticides on arable land and the study suggested that it was the pesticides being applied to the golf courses that were causing the cancers (Lowy, 2004). Pesticides from golf courses have frequently contaminated ground water in the past and caused illnesses and deaths in people and wildlife (Cox, 1991). In some areas fish have died or developed tumours also.

However, golf courses on land outside protected areas can be useful for conservation, and in countries such as the United Kingdom conservation agencies are working with golf course managers to promote their management for conservation as well as recreation (English Heritage, 2005; Gange, Lindsay and Schofield, 2003). Attempts to minimize pesticide use and use organic methods to control pests and add nutrients to the soil are being promoted. However, these initiatives are clearly different to the proposal to develop a golf course at Mweya, in that they are seen as adding semi-natural environments to the existing system of parks and reserves rather than being incorporated within them. A few national parks such as Kruger National Park in South Africa and Yosemite National Park in California do have golf courses within them but these were usually constructed at least 30 years ago or more and it is the policy in both these countries not to build golf courses in national parks today.

The idea of building a golf course at Mweya is not new and was proposed as far back as the early 1970s. The proposed location by Marasa Holdings is currently on the lower peninsula at Mweya because of the ease of access for water that would be needed for the greens of the golf course. An alternative location would be behind the lodge and staff quarters at Mweya, out of sight of the public but this would be more complicated because water would have to be pumped up higher. The Uganda Wildlife Authority has not been in favour of having a golf course in the park because of its impacts on the natural habitats in the park and because it is generally recognized these days that National Parks are places reserved for wildlife rather than recreation purposes, although they allow recreation in terms of wildlife viewing. Different categories of protected area are given to places where the habitat is modified such as with golf courses. A compromise option proposed by the Uganda Wildlife Authority is to have the golf course at Katwe village, on land that is an enclave within the park but not part of the park.

There was a need to assess the demand for a golf course from visitors coming to the park because of the lack of information about this. It would be imprudent to move ahead with the development of golf facilities before making sure that this is what people really want from their visit to Queen Elizabeth National Park. The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) has been working in Uganda with Uganda Wildlife Authority and other conservation partners since 1957, undertaking research to provide information to help conservation managers make more informed decisions. WCS proposed to UWA to undertake a questionnaire survey of tourists visiting Queen Elizabeth National park to assess why they visit this park and what they want to see and also to gauge their reaction to the idea of building a golf course on Mweya Peninsula or at Katwe Fishing Village. This report summarises the findings of the questionnaire.

Questionnaire survey design and implementation

A questionnaire was developed (see Appendix I) that was designed to be relatively simple and easy to complete by tourists and would not take up too much of their time. It aimed to obtain basic information about:

1. their nationality
2. where they were staying in the park,
3. how many times they had visited the park,
4. what attracted the visitors to the park in the first place
5. what areas of the park they most liked
6. which animals they most want to see
7. their perceptions about the entry fee and what they would want it to be if they couldn't see the animals they came to see
8. whether a golf course would make a visit to the park or Mweya Safari Lodge more attractive
9. Whether the golf course should be visible or hidden
10. whether people would mind the 9km drive from Mweya lodge to Katwe to play golf.

A very similar questionnaire was sent to tour operators in AUTO (Association of Uganda Tour Operators) and also given to tour operators taking clients to the park (Appendix II).

The questionnaire was taken to Queen Elizabeth National Park by one of us (C.Roberts) and over the process of a week UWA staff were trained to hand out the questionnaire to tourists at the two main gates that take tourists to Mweya Peninsula (Katunguru and Kabatoro), at the Visitors Centre at Mweya and on the launch trip along the Kazinga Channel from Mweya Peninsula. An emphasis was made on asking tourists to complete the questionnaire without making any statements about UWA's or WCS's position on the matter of the golf course.

The questionnaire survey started in mid April 2006 and was brought to a stop in early July 2006. During this time approximately half the questionnaires were completed during the 'off-peak season' (April-May) and half during the main tourist season (June-July). This aimed to control for the differing responses that might have been obtained from the types of people that visit at these different times.

Results

Sample size and distribution

Two hundred and ninety nine respondents completed the questionnaires aimed at tourists visiting the park and a further 20 Tour Operators responded to the questionnaire tailored to them. Of the tourists that completed the questionnaire, 168 (56.2%) were staying at Mweya Lodge, 56 (18.7%) at the Mweya Hostel, 18 (6.0%) at the campsite, 12 (4.0%) at Jacana Lodge and 43 (14.4%) were either not staying in the park (25 people) or did not state where they were staying (Table 1). Thirty different nationalities were interviewed ranging from people from East Africa, North America (including Mexico), Europe, Australia/New Zealand and Asia (Table 1).

Table 1. A breakdown of the different tourists who were interviewed by nationality and lodging.

Nationality	Campsite	Mweya Hostel	Ishasha	Jacana Lodge	Mweya Lodge	Not lodging in park/no response	Total
Australian				1	2	2	5
Belgian	1	2				2	5
British	4	8		1	35	3	51
Canadian	1	7			17	2	27
Chinese					1		1
Danish		1			4	1	6
Dutch	6	7		2	9	4	28
Finnish					1		1
French					2	1	3
German		2	1	1	2	2	8
Indian	1	2			6	3	12
Irish					10		10
Italian		2		1	6	2	11
Japanese				1	3	1	5
Kenyan				1	2	2	5
Korean						1	1
Lebanese					1		1
Mexican		1					1
Nepalese	1				1		2
New Zealander	1	4			1		6
Norwegian	1	1			1		3
Russian					1	1	2
Rwandan		2		2	3	1	8
South African		1			3	1	5
Spanish		1			1		2
Swedish					3		3
Swiss					2	1	3
Ugandan	1	5		1	12	9	28
USA-American	1	10		1	39	4	55
Not stated						1	1
Total	18	56	1	12	168	44	299

These nationalities were grouped into the following categories to allow statistical analysis of differences between nationality groups:

1. North America (USA, Canada and Mexico) - 83
2. Britain, Australia and New Zealand - 72
3. Rest of Europe - 74
4. Asia and Middle East - 22
5. Africa - 44

Visiting frequency

Most visitors were visiting Queen Elizabeth park for the first time (61.3%), 20.5% were visiting for the second time, 9.4% between 3-5 times, 4.7% between 6-10 times and 4.0% more than 10 times. It is clear therefore that most visitors to Queen Elizabeth Park are visiting only once or twice at the moment (81.8% of visitors). The only nationalities that visited more than twice were: Australian, British, Canadian, Dutch, German, Indian, Irish, Italian, New Zealand, Rwandan, South African, Swiss, Ugandan and American (or 46.7% of nationalities interviewed).

What attracts visitors to Queen Elizabeth National Park?

Visitors were asked what attracted them to the park and why as well as where in the park they most enjoyed visiting and why. Not surprisingly most people came to the park to see wildlife and 55.5% stated that this was the main reason they came to the park. However, scenery, nature in general and the atmosphere of the place were also important factors (Figure 1). Visitors residing at Mweya Safari Lodge were significantly more likely to cite the importance of the scenery and wildlife (Nature) and the atmosphere of the place as being important to them ($X^2 = 7.37$, $df=2$, $P=0.025$).

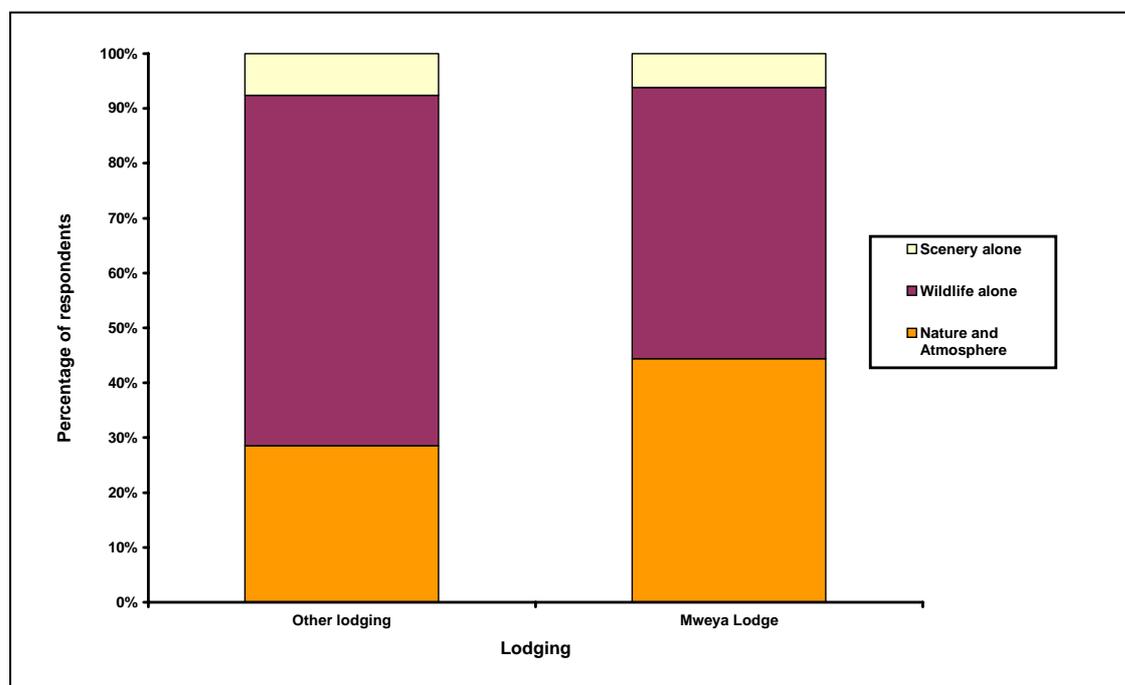


Figure 1. The percentage of respondents who lodged at Mweya Safari Lodge or elsewhere who stated that the main attraction of the park was either the scenery, the wildlife or a combination of these together with the atmosphere of the place.

There were also significant differences ($X^2=14.96$, $df=8$, $P=0.04$) between the different nationalities in what they want to see (Figure 2), with Asian, British/Australian and African visitors all putting more emphasis on wildlife alone (59-72%) than North Americans and visitors from the rest of Europe (47-49%).

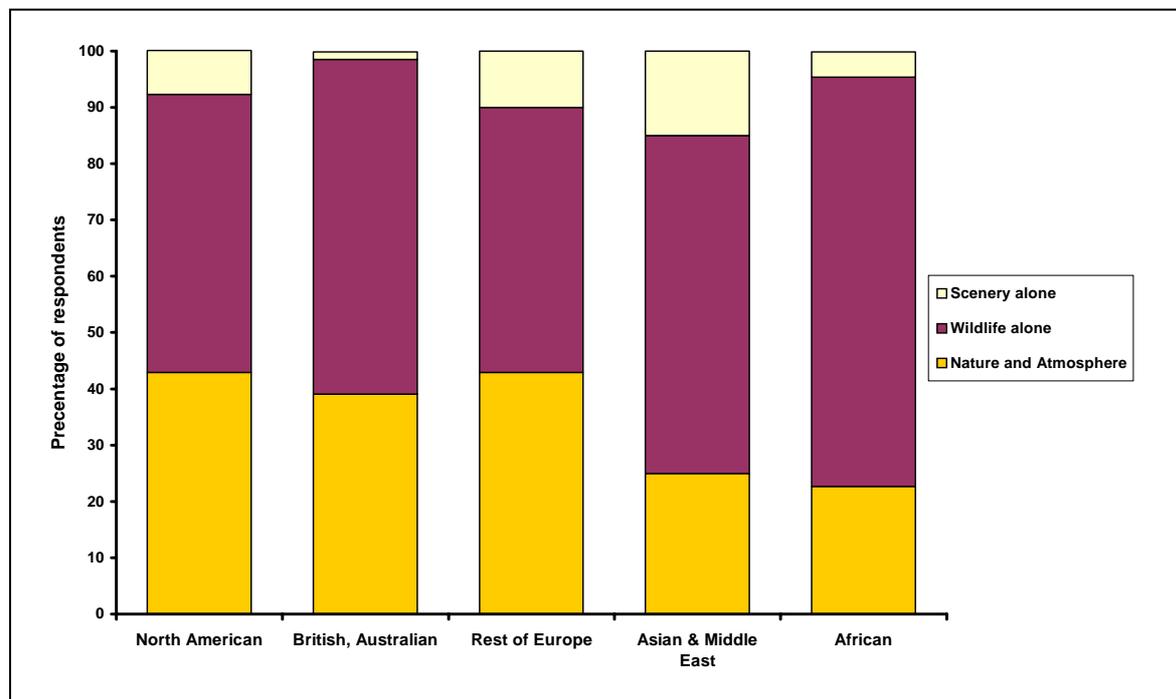


Figure 2. Variation in what different nationality groups want to see in the park.

Of the areas that tourists most liked in the park Kazinga Channel and the boat trip clearly ranked highest (54.4%) followed by Mweya Peninsula (8.8%), the craters (6.9%), Ishasha (6.0%) and Kyambura Gorge (5.1%). This will have been partly biased by the fact that most of the people interviewed were tourists in the Mweya area (questionnaires were not given around Jacana Lodge or in Ishasha). However it is clear that the boat trip on the channel stands out as THE major attraction in this part of the park.

Wildlife Tourists want to see

Tourists were asked to rank the wildlife that they most hoped to see in the park. Many people did not want to assign different ranks to different species (see Appendix I for options) but preferred to rank several species at the same rank and others at a lower rank. However, for the purposes of the analysis we could not accept this method of ranking as it was not comparable between visitors. We therefore limited the analysis to those visitors (202) who completed the questionnaire as requested and gave each animal an individual rank or gave some of them no rank.

There was a significant difference in the rank scores visitors gave to different species (Friedman $X^2=438.3$, $df=8$, $P=0.000$). Lions ranked highest followed by leopard, elephant, hippopotamus and crocodiles (Table 2). Species that tourists listed in addition to those in Table 2, included chimpanzees, monkeys, bushbuck, warthog, fish eagle and hyaenas. Some also listed giraffe, a species that does not exist in the park and has never been known to exist here in the past.

Table 2. Average rank for nine species thought to be species tourists are most likely to want to see. Lowest number = highest rank.

Species	Lion	Leopard	Elephant	Hippo	Crocodile	Buffalo	Giant Forest Hog	Uganda Kob	Birds
Mean rank	1.7	2.3	2.5	4.3	5.2	6.1	6.3	6.9	6.9

The Giant Forest Hog ranked fairly low and did not differ much from buffalo, kob and birds. However, this species is rarely seen in the wild and Queen Elizabeth together with Virunga Park in Congo (over the border from Queen Elizabeth) are probably the best sites in the world to view this species. This fact could be marketed as they are fairly impressive animals.

Entry fees and changes if animals become too rare in the park

Tourists were asked what they thought of the entry fees, whether they were very low, low, fair, high or very high. Most respondents stated they thought the entry fees were fair (72%) indicating that UWA seems to have set a reasonable rate for park entry (Figure 3). About 20% of respondents indicated that the fees were high or very high, indicating that the gate fees could probably not be increased much more.

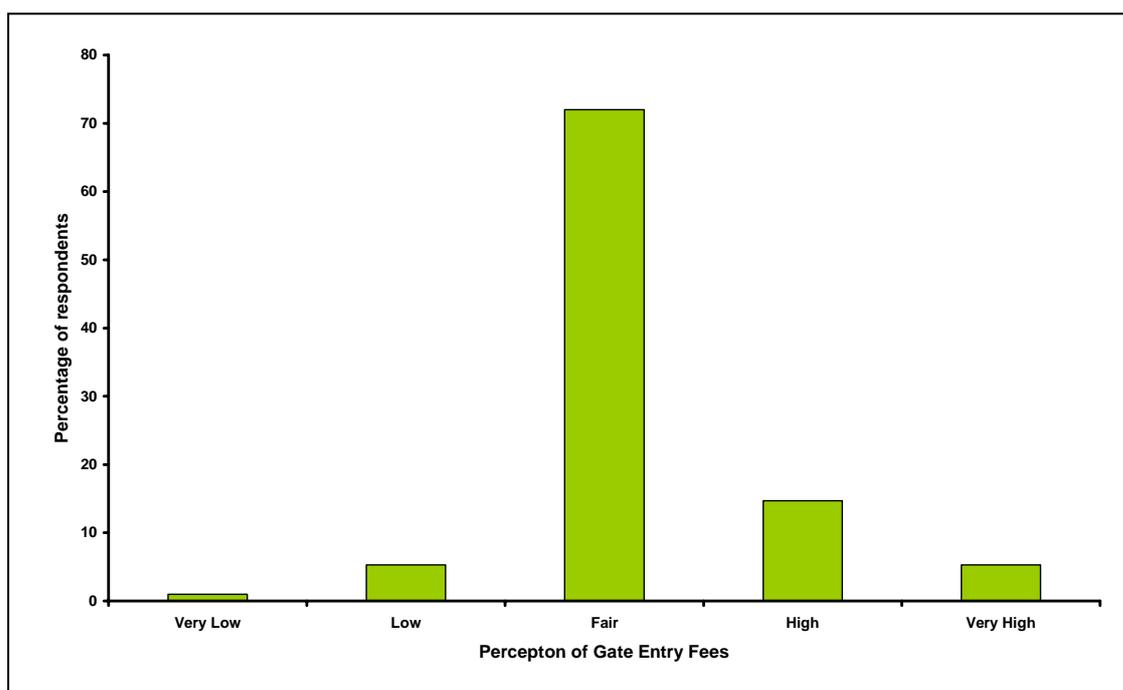


Figure 3. Respondents perception of gate entry fees.

There was significant variation in this perception ($X^2=38.5$, $df=16$, $P=0.001$) between nationality groups with people from Asia and the Middle East being more likely to state that the park entry fees are high or very high (figure 4).

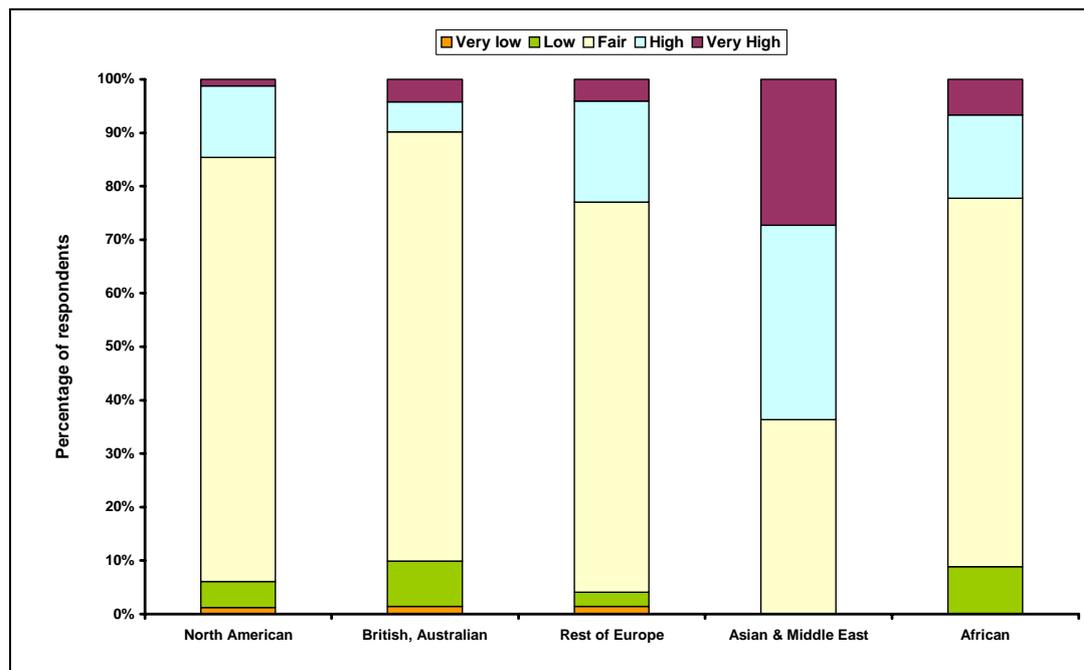


Figure 4. Variation in perception of the price by nationality group.

Visitors were also asked whether they would want to pay less to enter the park if their most preferred species became very rare or extinct in the park. This question was posed because there have been concerns about some species, particularly large carnivores, which have been declining in number because of poisoning by local communities.

About one third of respondents (37.7%) stated that they would want to see a reduction in fees if their most wanted species became rare or extinct. This varied between nationality groups with 65% of Asians/Middle East and 50% of Africans stating that they would want to see the fees reduced compared with 39% for Europe, 35% for Brits/Australians and 31% for North Americans. When asked how much they would want the fees reduced, the average was 53.6% of the existing gate entry fees. There was no significant difference ($F=0.574$, $df=4$, $P=0.68$) between nationality group and the percentage reduction visitors would want (average varied between 48-57%). So effectively about one third of visitors would want to pay about half price if lions, leopards or elephants were to disappear from, or become very hard to see in, the park.

Reaction to plans for developing a golf course

Tourists were asked whether plans to build a golf course on Mweya Peninsula would be more or less likely to encourage them to visit the park or Mweya Safari Lodge or whether it wouldn't affect their decision to visit the park or the lodge.

In terms of visiting the park, only 7.7% of tourists responded that a golf course on the peninsula would be *more* likely to make them want to visit the park. However, 59.6% stated that it would actually make them *less* likely to want to visit the park. The remainder (32.7%) stated that it would not influence their decision to visit. A reasonable number of respondents (23.7% - nearly half of those that stated they would be less likely to visit the park) actually added comments (with no prompting) on the questionnaire stating their opposition to the golf course, while nobody strongly argued for the golf course. Comments from tourists included things such as: 'it would spoil the scenery of Mweya Peninsula, it would pollute the lake, it

would destroy the atmosphere of the place, golf doesn't belong in a national park, they would never use it even though they play golf elsewhere, a silly and greedy idea, this would lead to an increase in fees to cover the cost of running the golf course, people drive up to 20km to play golf elsewhere so course should be outside park, don't build it in the park, there are lots of golf courses in the world but only one Queen Elizabeth Park, it would be a sin, allow other hotels in the park instead, a stupid idea – don't allow it'.

When the data were analysed by whether people were staying at Mweya Safari Lodge or elsewhere the percentage of people opposing the golf course rose to 63.1% while the number wanting the course remained the same (7.7%). Clients staying at Mweya Safari Lodge were therefore slightly more likely to state that a golf course would deter them from visiting the park.

When people were asked whether a golf course would be more likely to make them stay at Mweya Safari Lodge 8.4% stated that they would be more likely to stay there. However, 58.8% stated that they would be less likely to stay at the lodge while 32.8% stated it wouldn't affect their decision. Visitors who were actually lodging at Mweya Safari Lodge were less likely to state that a golf course would attract them (7.7%) and more likely to state it would deter them (63.9%) than people who were lodging elsewhere (9.4% and 52.0% respectively).

When analysed by nationality group, there were significant differences in responses between groups ($X^2=33.7$, $df=8$, $P=0.000$), with Asian/Middle East and African nationals more likely to state that a golf course would attract them to Mweya Safari Lodge (Figure 5).

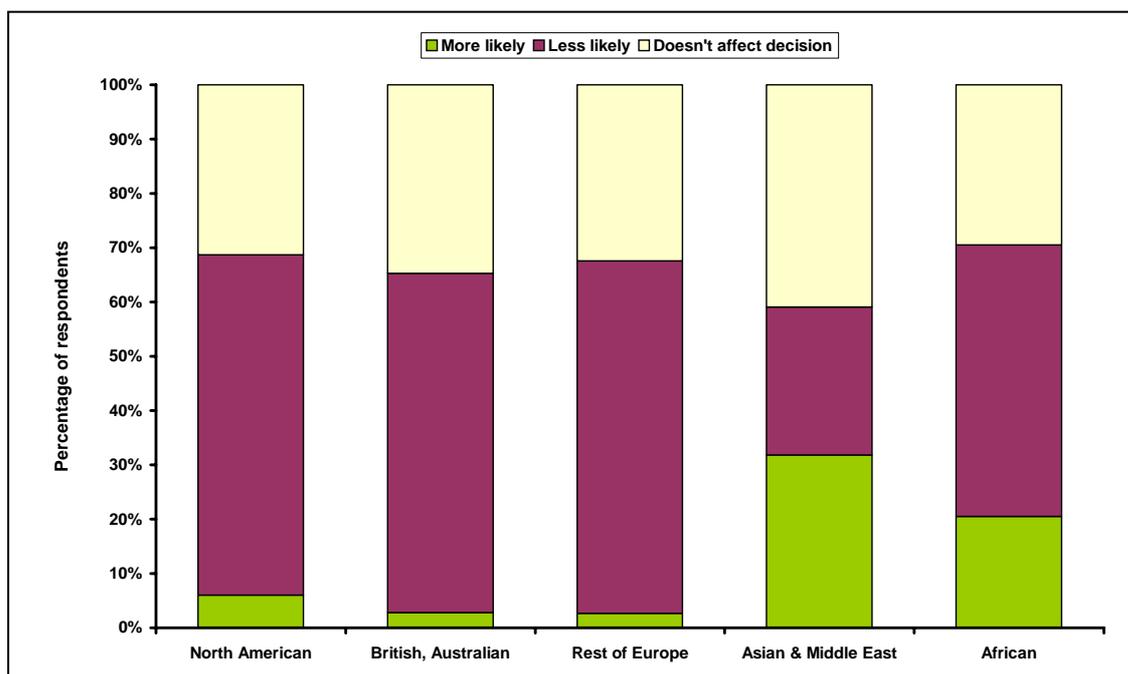


Figure 5. Variation between nationality groups about whether a golf course would make them more or less likely to stay at Mweya Safari Lodge.

When only those people who were actually staying at Mweya Safari Lodge are split by nationality group the number of people reporting the golf course would make them less likely to stay at the lodge increases for most groups (North Americans dropped by 2% but still 60.7% stated they would be less likely to stay at the lodge), and nearly doubles for Asian/Middle East clients (27.3% to 41.7%). The number stating they would be more likely to stay at the lodge does not change by more than about 1% though. Therefore existing clients

at the lodge were more antagonistic to the idea of a golf course than people who were not staying at the lodge.

Visitors were asked if the golf course was to be developed whether it should be visible (on the lower peninsula) or hidden from sight (probably behind all the existing accommodation). Most people (86.5%) stated that the golf course should be hidden from sight and there was no significant difference ($X^2=0.44$, $df=1$, $P=0.51$) between people who were staying at the lodge (87.7%) or not (85.0%) in this response.

Tourists were also asked whether the 9 km drive to Katwe would deter them from playing golf if the course was to be built there in the enclave within the park. Only 19.3% stated that this drive would deter them and there was no significant difference between visitors staying at the lodge or elsewhere ($X^2=0.19$, $df=1$, $P=0.67$). However, if analysed so that the preferences of people for golf are separated out it is clear that amongst the group that stated that a golf course would make them more likely to stay at Mweya Safari Lodge, 52% were likely to be discouraged from driving the 9 km to Katwe and this was significantly higher than other groups ($X^2=20.3$, $df=2$, $P=0.000$). In other words half of the people who state they want to play golf would not want to drive the 9 km to Katwe to play, but most of them are willing to drive the 25-30km to the Kasenyi region of the park to look for lions.

Questionnaire survey of Tour Operators

The results of the questionnaire survey given to the Tour Operators produced very similar results. Only 10% of operators thought a golf course would help them market Queen Elizabeth park and Mweya lodge as a destination while 80% believed that it would make it less marketable. Ten percent thought it would not make any difference.

For the species their clients most wanted to see lions ranked highest followed by leopard and elephant and they stated that they would only want to pay 49% gate entry fee if these species could not be seen. Sixty five percent stated their clients came to see wildlife while 30% stated that scenery and wildlife was important.

Conclusions

Visitors to Queen Elizabeth National Park

The sample of 299 visitors we interviewed in this study can be compared with the numbers of different nationality groups who visit Uganda (data from the Ministry of Tourism – Tourism Uganda). Not surprisingly many more African visitors come to Uganda (primarily on business) than visit the park while a higher proportion of North Americans, British/Australian and Europeans visit the park than you would expect from the customs entry data (figure 6). At present the percentage difference between Asians/Middle East nationalities visiting Uganda and visiting the park in this study is only 2.3% compared with 21.6% for Americans, 14.4% for British/Australian/New Zealand and 17.7% for the rest of Europe. Consequently not many of the group that most stated that golf would attract them to the park and lodge are visiting the park in comparison with other non-African groups.

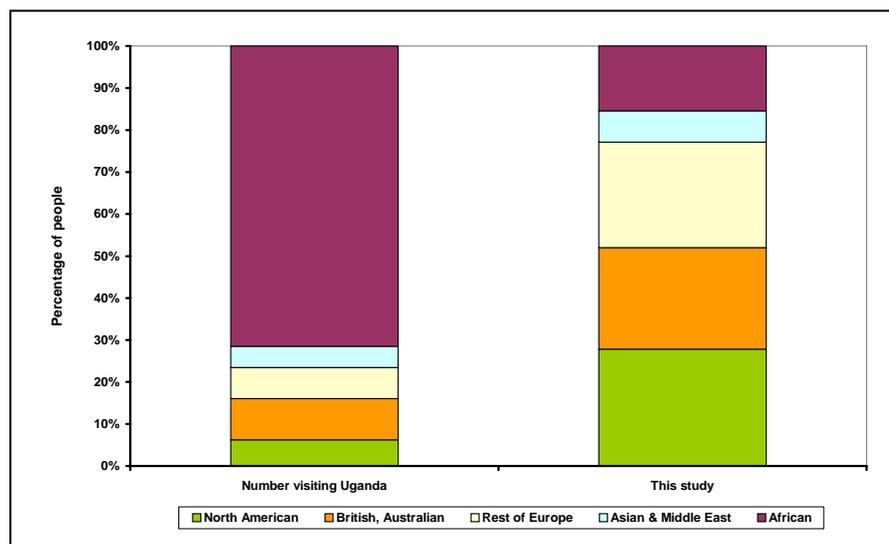


Figure 6. Percentage of people in different nationality groups visiting Uganda compared with the sample in this study.

The trend in increases in visitors to Uganda has been pretty similar since 1995 (figure 7).

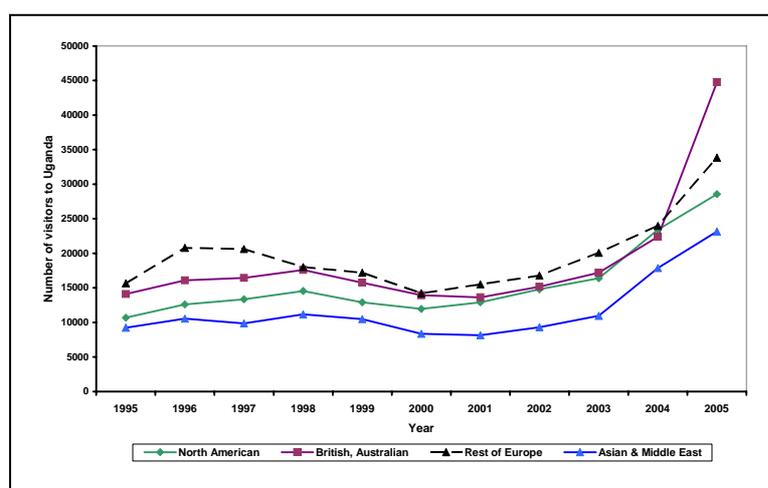


Figure 7. The trend in visitors to Uganda since 1995. The increase in the British/Australian curve in 2005 is because Australian/New Zealanders were not recorded separately prior to 2005.

There was an increase in numbers up to 1999 but following the killing of tourists in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park the numbers declined slightly and took another 3 years to return back to the 1999 numbers. Numbers are increasing more rapidly now for all nationality groups. Consequently at present there are disproportionately more North Americans, Europeans and Australian/New Zealanders visiting Queen Elizabeth National Park than Asians and Africans. Whether the numbers of Asians and Africans visiting the park could be increased by constructing a golf course or whether they tend to have less disposable income is therefore one of the issues that need to be addressed. There are certainly wealthy Asians and Africans who could visit Queen Elizabeth National Park but is building a golf course likely to provide enough incentive to do so?

Attractions for visitors and golf.

About half of the visitors interviewed stated they came to the park primarily to see wildlife. However, the other half considered the scenery and atmosphere of the place to be as important as the wildlife. Those visitors staying at Mweya Safari Lodge were more likely to consider the scenery and the comfort of the accommodation, which the lodge provides, to be important as well as the wildlife. As a result there was more concern expressed by people staying at the lodge about the plans to construct the golf course than there were from people staying elsewhere.

The importance of the concept of 'Wilderness' is particularly prominent in Western cultures (European, North American and Australian/New Zealand). Many tourists spend lots of money each year to visit areas of wilderness or 'pristine' areas and they value these areas over areas that have been altered by man. It is important to realize this fact when planning for tourism in Uganda. While people will pay to come to Uganda to see its stunning wildlife it is as important that the wildlife is living in a 'wilderness' area as well. It is far cheaper to pay to go and see animals in a Zoo in their countries and therefore they will judge Uganda's parks by how impacted they are by people. This is why parks such as the Serengeti and Ngorogoro Crater are so popular because they are large areas of natural habitat that are not obviously affected by man.

As a result the idea of constructing a golf course inside a national park is something few people would want from these countries as it is considered 'tacky' to try to change something natural and beautiful into a theme park. While the same people will happily play golf near their home or on a course on holiday somewhere they don't want to feel they have contributed to the destruction of a wilderness area. This is why such a large percentage of visitors stated a golf course on Mweya Peninsula would deter them from visiting the park or Mweya Safari Lodge.

Attracting Asians and people from the Middle East

It is clear that people from Asian and Middle Eastern countries are under-represented in the visitors to Queen Elizabeth National Park. This is certainly a potentially market for Uganda and is largely untapped at present although numbers to Uganda are increasing (figure 7). More people of these nationalities stated that a golf course would attract them to visit the park and the lodge than other nationalities and so certainly there might be potential to attract more people from Asia and the Middle East with a golf course. They were also the only nationality group to have a higher percentage of people stating a golf course would attract them than make them less likely to visit. However, this has to be offset with the potential loss of customers from Europe, North America and Australia and Africa. In addition, those Asians who actually stayed at Mweya Safari Lodge were nearly twice as likely to state that a golf course would deter them from staying at the lodge in future and were more numerous than the Asians at the lodge who stated a golf course would attract them.

The visitors who completed the questionnaires from this region of the globe were also significantly more likely to complain about the park entry fees being too high and were, therefore, likely to want to spend less money in the park. Whether they would be willing to spend additional money to play golf in the park is something that would need researching as this is clearly the only potential market for a golf course in the park.

Costs of establishing and maintaining a golf course at Mweya

Golf courses are expensive to establish and also require significant amounts of money to maintain. There would be a need to fence the course if people wanted relatively flat greens for putting because hippos, buffalos, elephants and other large ungulates all visit the peninsula. This fence would need regular maintenance and would have to be electrified to keep these large animals out. There would be a need to water the greens regularly and thereby pump water from the lake and the greens would probably need fertilizers applied regularly as the soils are not very rich in the park. Staff would need to be hired to care for the course as well. Whether the costs required could be offset by the increase in numbers of tourists to Mweya Safari Lodge is doubtful given the fact that the lodge would have to attract enough people to compensate for the customers they might lose who would regard the golf course as unsightly and choose to lodge elsewhere.

At present Mweya Safari Lodge is THE premier destination for wealthy tourists visiting the park. This is because of its high quality of accommodation and service as well as its great location and scenery. People also are attracted here because of the Kazinga Channel boat ride which is by far the most important attraction for visitors to this part of the park. Therefore it might be worth Marasa Holdings taking the risk of creating a golf course on the peninsula banking on the launch trip to stop people deciding to lodge elsewhere. However, while this might have been less of a risk in the past, this risk will increase in the near future with other options for accommodation developing on the escarpment outside the park and the tented camp that has been established by Wild Frontiers in Ishasha. Relying on the launch trip to cause people to lodge on the peninsula should be weighed against the fact that people will happily drive the 25-30km to try to see lions in Kisenyi every morning and evening and so may happily do the same to take the launch trip from another accommodation site. The Madhvani Group would therefore need to be very sure that they could not only increase the number of tourists from Asian and the Middle East to compensate for the tourists from elsewhere that they will lose but also ensure that they could increase them again to be able to cover the costs of establishing and maintaining the golf course. Uganda Wildlife Authority and its Board should also need to be convinced that they will not lose income for the park before they allow a golf course to be established. Therefore Marasa Holdings should be requested to develop a detailed business plan with good facts and numbers to explain where they would attract the additional tourists from and how they would hope to offset tourists that might decide to visit elsewhere.

Conservation of large predators in Queen Elizabeth National Park

Over 50% of visitors came to the park to see wildlife and most of the remaining visitors stated that wildlife and scenery were important. The two most hoped for animals in a visit to the park were lions and leopards, large predators that are thought to be declining in the park. There are thought to be about 100 lions left in the park and nobody knows about the numbers of leopards but recent arrests of poachers have included several leopard skins. Large predators in Queen Elizabeth (including hyaenas) are most likely to come into conflict with people with livestock. There have been several incidences in the recent past of lions and hyaenas being poisoned by livestock owners who have deliberately poisoned the carcass of an animal killed by these predators, killing the predators as well as many vultures

and other scavengers. We probably do not know of all the incidences but we know that in the last two years 7 lions, 15 hyaenas and 5 leopards have been killed. Given the low numbers in the population these are significant numbers.

The main reason these animals are killed is because they have killed livestock in the fishing villages or in villages adjacent to the park. However, it is actually illegal to be keeping any livestock in the fishing village enclaves but UWA has had trouble enforcing this law because of politicians lobbying for people to be allowed to do this. Numbers of livestock in the fishing villages have been increasing over the past few years and as a result many of them are now being grazed within the park rather than on the land within the fishing village enclaves. Currently there are also over 10,000 cattle in the corridor linking Queen Elizabeth park to Virunga Park, north of Lake Edward. This is probably causing conflict between people and large predators and is probably preventing the migration of animals between these parks and will therefore be increasing the levels of crop raiding in these areas also.

Most tourists coming to Uganda come to see the mountain gorillas. In the past people visited Kenya or Tanzania and then came to Uganda for the gorillas and left. If Uganda is to realize its potential as a tourist destination it needs to find ways to keep tourists in the country and thereby increase their spending here. In the 1960s tourists came to Uganda preferentially over Kenya and Tanzania and if animal numbers recover this is still a possible future scenario. After all Uganda has forest and savanna wildlife and can offer gorillas, chimpanzees and 16 other primate species as well as the savanna mammals. Queen Elizabeth and Virunga Parks have more birds than any other site in Africa. It is clear that tourists want large predators and also elephants from a visit to Queen Elizabeth and that without these animals they would only want to pay half price and would probably be less likely to visit the park as a result. A total of 48,720 people visited Queen Elizabeth Park in 2005 although many of these were Ugandan students. Paying visitors numbered 26,354 bringing in \$270,737 in just gate fees alone (excluding vehicle costs and accommodation). Visitors stated that they would want to pay about 50% gate entry fees if they could not see lions so that the park would lose about \$135,369 if there were few lions (about \$1,354 per lion in the park). It is usually estimated that tourists spend at least 10 times the gate entry fee in accommodation, transport and other costs which would increase the value of lions to Uganda to about \$13,500 for each lion in the park. This is a very crude calculation but effectively this is roughly the amount Uganda could lose every year for every lion killed by poisoning. When pastoralists are found poisoning lions in the park this is what they should effectively be fined as a result.

It is critical therefore for the Tourism industry as well as for conservation that the livestock that are being kept illegally in the fishing village enclaves within the park are removed and that UWA and its partner NGOs work with local communities to minimize the conflict with these large predators.

Options for Mweya Safari Lodge to increase visitors/revenue

One of the stated problems given by Marasa Holdings was that their occupancy of Mweya Lodge was only about 58% (Rutega 2006) although the previous Executive Director of UWA stated he believed it was nearer 80% (Mugisha, 2006). Their answer to solve this was to propose the development of the golf course. This study shows that investing in the golf course would be a risky venture given the large percentage of people, particularly existing clients for the Mweya Safari Lodge, who were opposed to it.

It would be better for Marasa Holdings to consider other ways in which they might increase their revenue in the park. We believe it is less likely that visitors will increase their length of stay in the park, given that most tourists are time limited and want to see as many sites as possible while on holiday. If people stay longer in future it is probably more likely that they

will spend a night in Ishasha as well as in the north of the park as the wildlife in this region is increasing and the lions are also becoming more habituated to cars. Consequently we believe that it would be better to look at options for increasing clients spending at the lodge rather than increasing residence time. There are potential areas such as the development of a Spa/beauty treatment parlour, creating activities for children for the times in the middle of the day when people are not viewing wildlife (possibly including a 'crazy golf' course in the lodge grounds), and working with UWA to develop other options for wildlife viewing (such as controlled night drives, photographic safari walks etc).

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Appendices

Appendix I. Questionnaire survey of Tourists visiting Queen Elizabeth National Park

1. Your nationality.....
2. Are you lodging in the park?
Yes / No. If yes where?
3. How many times have you been to Queen Elizabeth Park including this visit? Tick one
1..... 2..... 3-5.....5-10.....11+.....
4. What attracts you to Queen Elizabeth National Park?
.....
.....
5. From what you have seen, which part of the park did you most enjoy visiting
.....
Why?.....
.....
6. Which animal species do you most want to see? Put rank on only those species you want to see (1= most wanted, 2 = second most wanted etc)
Lion....., Elephant....., Leopard....., Buffalo....., Hippo....., Crocodile.....
Giant Forest Hog....., Uganda Kob....., Birds....., Other (name).....
7. Do you consider park entry fees (1 night: \$20 non-resident, \$10 resident, 5,000/= Ugandan; 2 nights: \$35, \$20, 7,500/= respectively) to be (tick one):
Very High....., High....., Fair....., Low....., Very low.....
8. If your highest ranked species became extinct or very hard to find in the park would you want the park entry fees reduced to attract you here? Yes No (circle one).
If Yes what would you want to pay instead.....
9. There are plans to build a golf course on Mweya Peninsula linked to Mweya Lodge. Would this make you more or less likely to visit the park or doesn't it affect your decision? (circle one) More Less Doesn't affect
9. Would a golf course on the peninsula make you more or less likely to stay at Mweya Lodge? (circle one) More Less Doesn't affect decision
10. If the gold course is built should it be able to be viewed from Mweya Lodge (i.e. on lower peninsula) or kept hidden (i.e. behind all lodging at Mweya)?
(circle one) In View Hidden
11. Another option might be to build the golf course at Katwe outside the park. If the course was built here would a drive of 9 km to Katwe **discourage** you from using the golf course?
(Circle one) Yes No

Thank you for your time

Appendix II. Questionnaire survey of Tour Operators taking clients to Queen Elizabeth National Park

1. Your nationality.....
2. Where do you usually lodge tourists in the park?.....
Why?.....
.....
.....
3. How many times per month on average do you bring clients to Queen Elizabeth Park? Tick one
1..... 2..... 3-5..... 5-10..... 11+.....
4. What attracts your clients to Queen Elizabeth National Park?
.....
.....
.....
.....
5. Which animal species do they most want to see? Put ranks on only those species they state they want to see (1= most wanted, 2 = second most wanted etc)
Lion....., Elephant....., Leopard....., Buffalo....., Hippo....., Crocodile.....
Giant Forest Hog....., Uganda Kob....., Birds....., Other (name).....
6. Do you consider park entry fees (1 night: \$20 non-resident, \$10 resident, 5,000/= Ugandan; 2 nights: \$35, \$20, 7,500/= respectively) to be (tick one):
Very High....., High....., Fair....., Low....., Very low.....
7. If your clients highest ranked species became extinct or very hard to find in the park would you want the park entry fees reduced to attract you here?
Yes No (circle one).
If Yes what would you want them to pay instead.....
8. There are plans to build a golf course at Mweya Peninsula linked to Mweya Lodge. Would this make it more or less marketable as a destination for your clients or doesn't it make a difference? (circle one) More Less No difference
9. Would a golf course on the peninsula make you more or less likely to put clients up at Mweya Lodge? (circle one) More Less Doesn't affect decision
10. If the gold course is built should it be able to be viewed from Mweya Lodge (ie on lower peninsula) or kept hidden (ie behind all lodging at Mweya)? (circle one)
In View Hidden
11. Another option might be to build a golf course at Katwe, 9 km away from Mweya. Do you think this distance would discourage your clients from playing golf? Yes No (Circle one)

Thank you for your time