Tourism Investment Opportunities in Northern Uganda

UTA

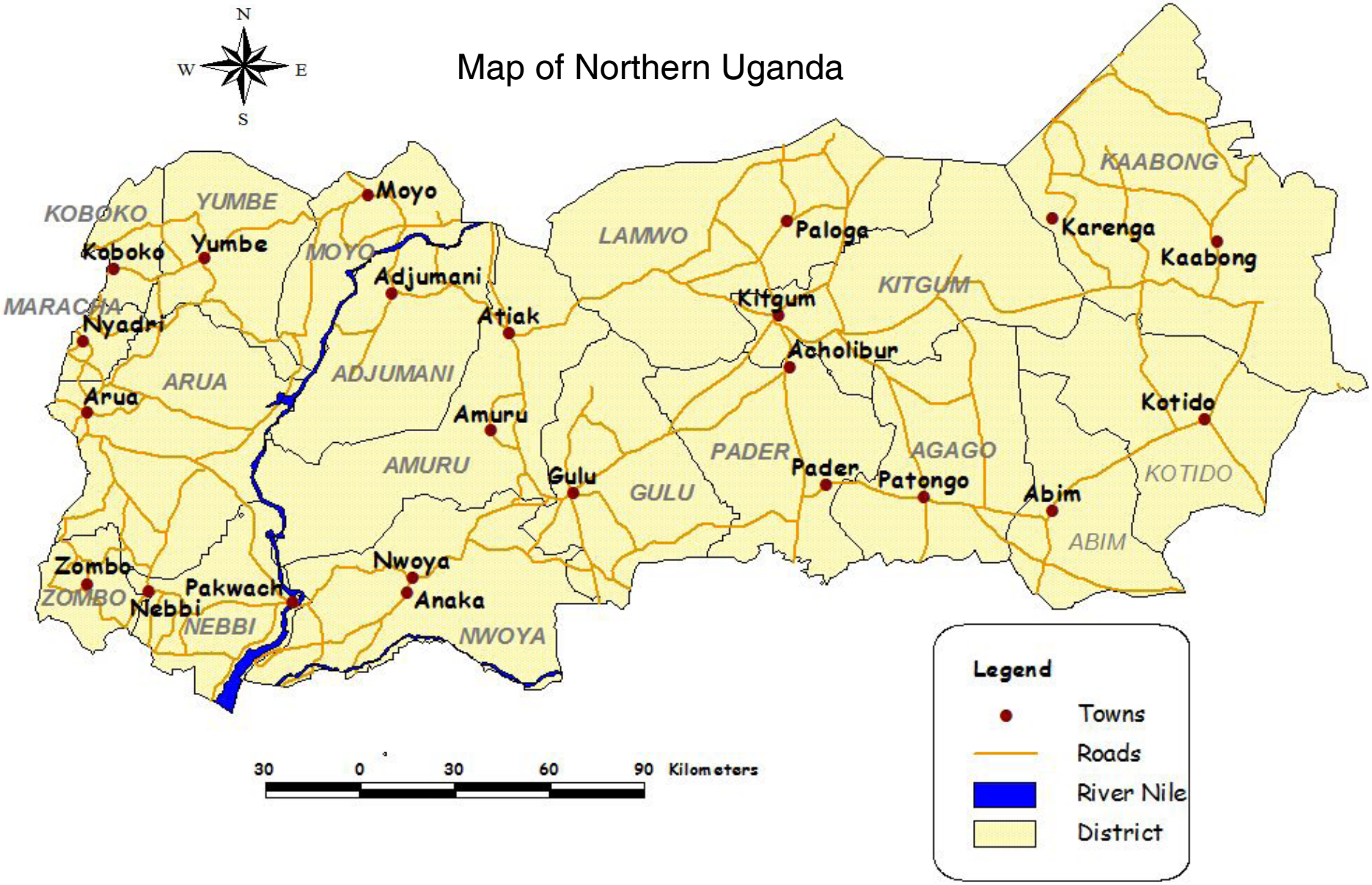
WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

WILD PROGRAMME

View of Sudan from Kitgum District

Map of Northern Uganda



Vegetation near Aruu Falls, Pader District

Acholi children in their village

Tourism Investment Opportunities in Northern Uganda

A homestead in Karenga and Narus Valley with mountain ranges around Kidepo Valley National Park in the background

Foreword

The departure of the Lord's Resistance Army has breathed new life into northern Uganda. The region is enjoying more visitors and its reputation as a "no go" area is being gradually reversed. Improved security is allowing the rapid development of the region and generating increasing interest from businesses and tourists alike.

With this in mind, the Wildlife Conservation Society and the Uganda Tourism Association have undertaken a study, with support from USAID through the WILD programme, to gauge the potential of tourism in northern Uganda and to promote its development and expansion. The study focused on untapped or underutilized attractions in Nebbi, Arua, Moyo and Adjumani Districts in the West Nile sub-region; Amuru, Gulu, Lamwo, Kitgum and Pader Districts in the central part of the Northern Region and Kaabong District in Karamoja. Murchison Falls National Park was not included in this study in light of its already well-developed tourism infrastructure.

This publication is the result of that study and its purpose is to introduce prospective investors to the variety of natural, cultural and historical attractions in the region that can be drawn on for tourism. It also is intended to support the Ugandan government's plans to diversify tourism products within the country – particularly along the Nile. It is our hope that it will inspire responsible private and government investment that will bring economic benefits to the local communities as well as protect and preserve the area's varied and unique resources.

The Wildlife Conservation Society is thankful to Charles Abola and Jim Ayorekire of Image Consult for carrying out this study. We also acknowledge the valuable contributions of the Uganda Wildlife Authority, the National Forestry Authority, Uganda Museums, the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Industry, the Ugandan Tourist Board and relevant district officials to this study, in addition to the development of Uganda's tourism industry as a whole. We also appreciate the valuable input from private sector companies, who have shown genuine interest in the opportunities provided by northern Uganda.

A final word of thanks goes to USAID for its generous support to conservation and tourism in Uganda in general and the WILD programme in particular. It is USAID's assistance that supported the study and allowed this brochure to be developed and printed.

Northern Uganda is open for business and tourists!

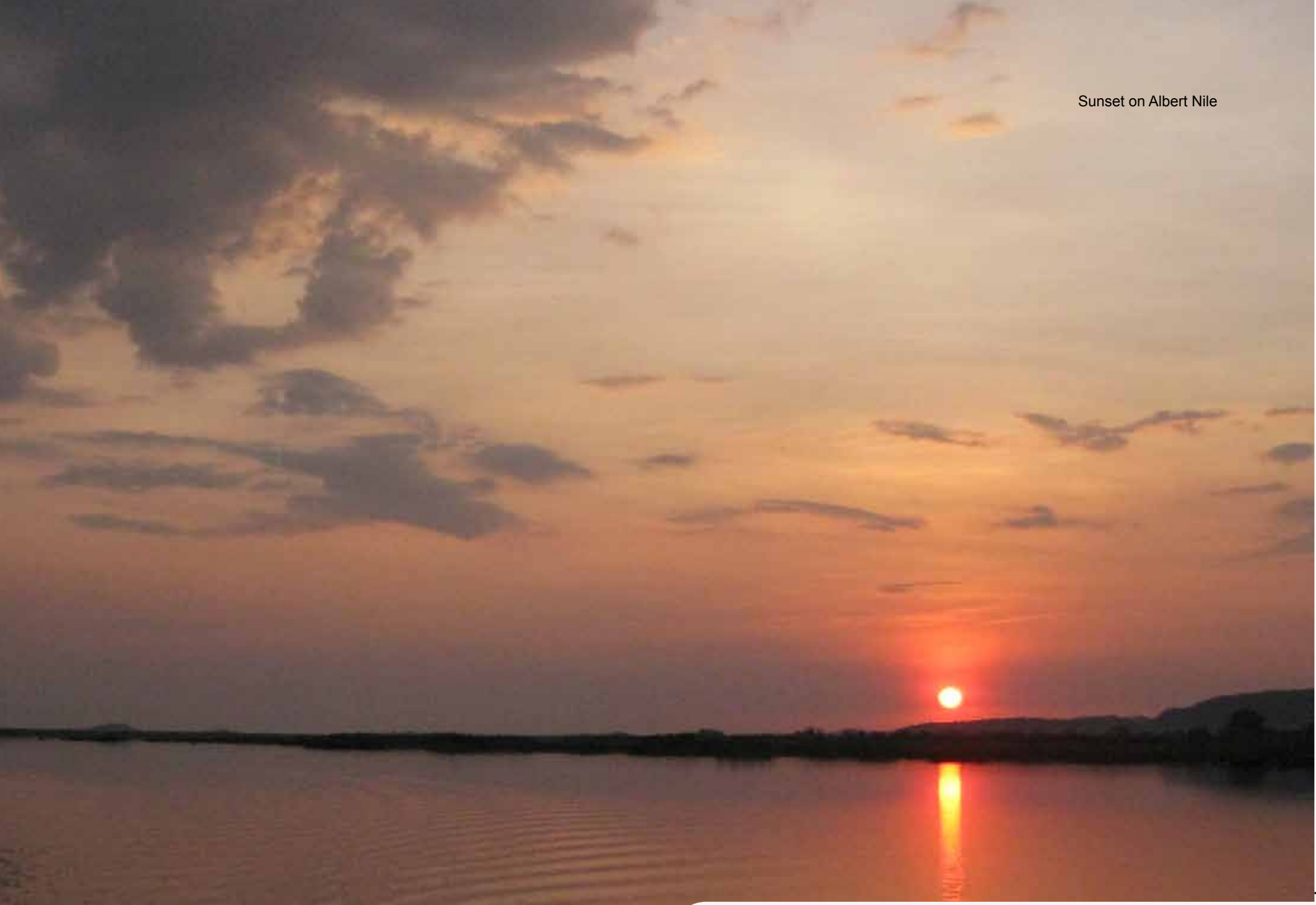
Jan F Broekhuis
Director, WCS

Amos Wekesa
Chairperson, UTA

Elephants in Kidepo Valley National Park

Contents

Foreword	5
Introduction	9
Summary of Market Survey Findings	11
Albert Nile	15
Culture	21
Landscapes	31
Wildlife	39
Historical Monuments and Sites	47
Potential Trails	54
Information Sheets	56



Sunset on Albert Nile

Introduction

Tourism in Uganda has largely recovered from the political instability in the 1970's and 1980's. In the Southern and Western regions of the country, private investment in tourist facilities is evident and this has made it possible for these sub-regions to handle the increasing number of visitors. In northern Uganda, tourism attractions ranging from wildlife-rich landscapes, scenic rivers, to cultural and historical sites, could not be accessed due to the insecurity, which at times included Murchison Fall National Park.

With the return of peace to northern Uganda, there is an increase in the number of visitors to the region. Currently, most are either business tourists or family and friends of people working in the region. Significant opportunities exist to expand the scope and scale of tourism activities throughout northern Uganda.

This document provides information on tourism potential along the Albert Nile and in the landscapes surrounding more prominent conservation areas of northern Uganda. It is intended to serve as an initial guide to prospective investors and visitors to the region. In this report, readers will find key findings of a market survey as well as the introduction to region's attractions, potential activities, and investment opportunities.

The northern Uganda districts referred to in this report are Nebbi, Arua, Moyo and Adjumani in the West Nile; Agago, Amuru, Gulu, Lamwo, Nwoya, Kitgum, Pader in the North Central region; and Kaabong in the North Eastern region.

Borassus palms near Pakwach

African Paradise Flycatcher in Kidepo Valley

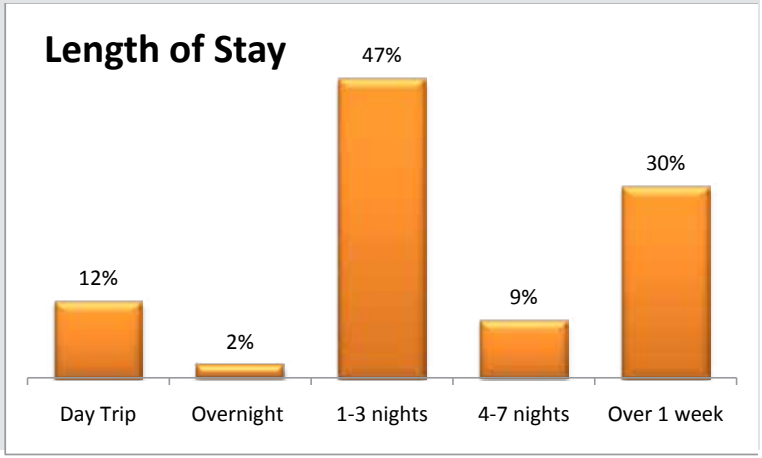
View toward East Madi Wildlife Reserve from Massa Camp (Uganda Wildlife Authority), Adjumani

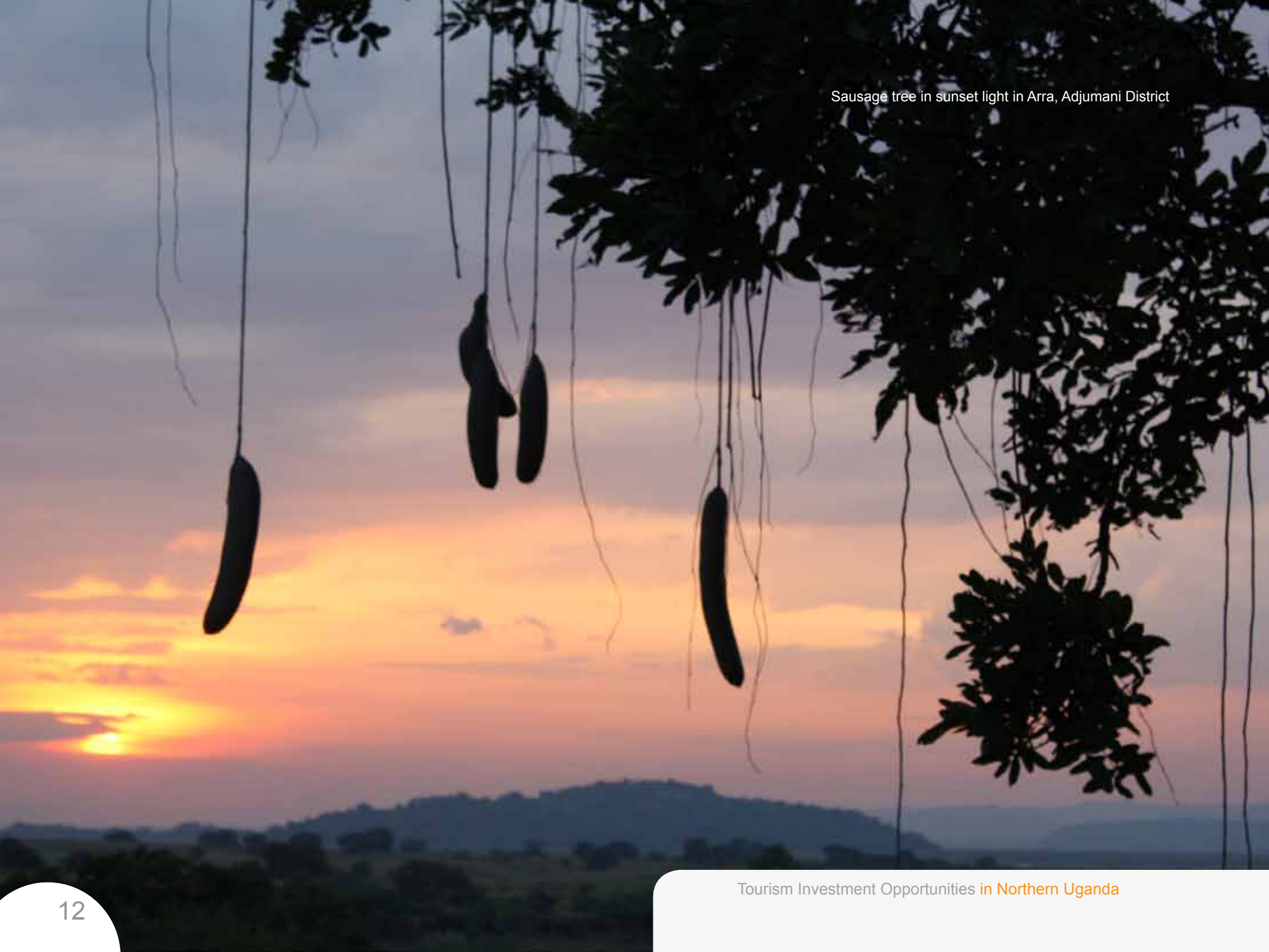
Summary of Market Survey Findings

A market study of tourism in northern Uganda was undertaken in July and August 2010 in Kampala, Jinja and Gulu among domestic and foreign tourists, tour operators and selected government stakeholders. The purpose of the study was to gather information about the general views and perceptions of tourism in northern Uganda. Data was gathered via face-to-face interviews, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires.

A total of 157 individuals participated in the study of which 39% were Ugandan, 38% were non-resident foreigners and 23% were resident foreigners. Only 36% of respondents had visited northern Uganda and most of these were foreigners who were there for paid or voluntary work purposes. The vast majority of those who visited northern Uganda for a holiday were backpackers. More than 50% of Ugandan respondents had not visited northern Uganda, which can be attributed to economic inability and the absence of a "holiday culture" among Ugandans.

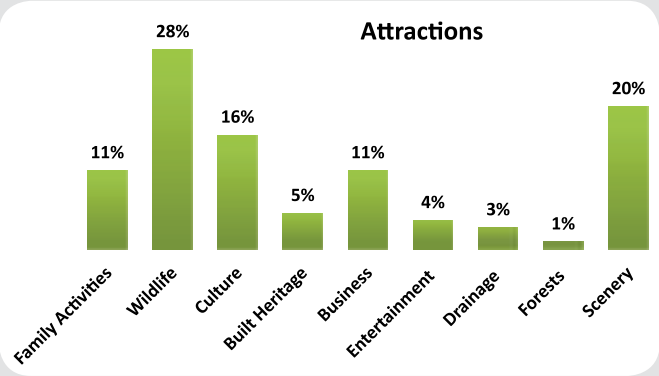
Because most of the visitors to northern Uganda were there already for work purposes, the study found that most visitors used private or public transport to reach their destinations. Only 20% travelled via tour vehicles. Most visitors stayed in northern Uganda 1-3 nights, though some reported making day trips to the region. In addition, 30% of people visit for more than a week who are usually persons doing business or working with organizations in the north of the country.



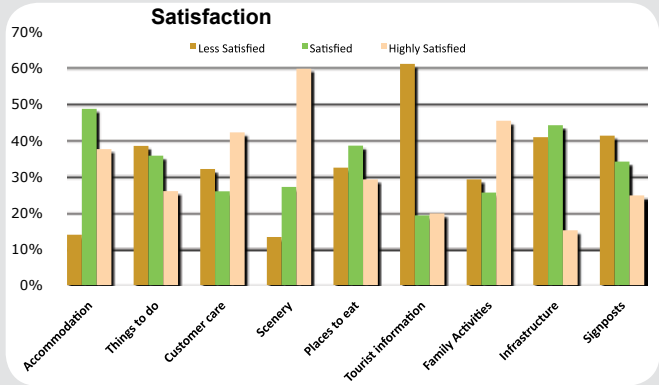


Sausage tree in sunset light in Arra, Adjumani District

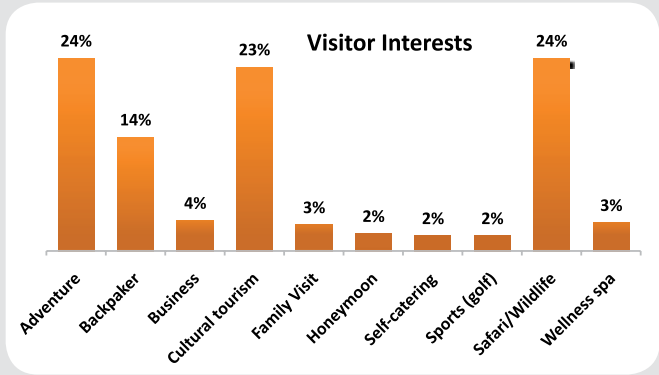
Northern Uganda's wildlife and scenery received the highest marks from visitors. Among those who had visited, 91% said that they would recommend a visit to the area to a friend, family member or colleague. Attractions and destinations apart from Murchison Falls National Park and Kidepo Valley National Park, however, were largely unknown by both visitors and tour operators or were felt to be too risky to visit. These perceptions come mainly from outdated reports from diplomatic missions, journalists and travel guides that fail to take into account the significant increase in security since the departure of the Lord's Resistance Army. While travelling to Kidepo via Karamoja remains unpredictable, the route by road through northern Uganda is now considered safe and this information must be promoted.



Among visitors, the level of satisfaction with available information about tourist attractions, signage, and infrastructure is very low. Without satisfactory improvements in accommodations, restaurants, signage and information centers, tourism in northern Uganda will continue to lag behind other areas of the country.



Not surprisingly, wildlife and safari visits ranked high among respondents as tourist attractions in northern Uganda. Cultural tourism and adventure tourism ranked equally high. Opportunities to involve local communities in village walks, outdoor recreational activities and cultural heritage should be explored. This will bring not only economic benefit to local individuals and communities as a whole but it also will enable them to participate more actively in the conservation of their natural, historical and cultural attractions.



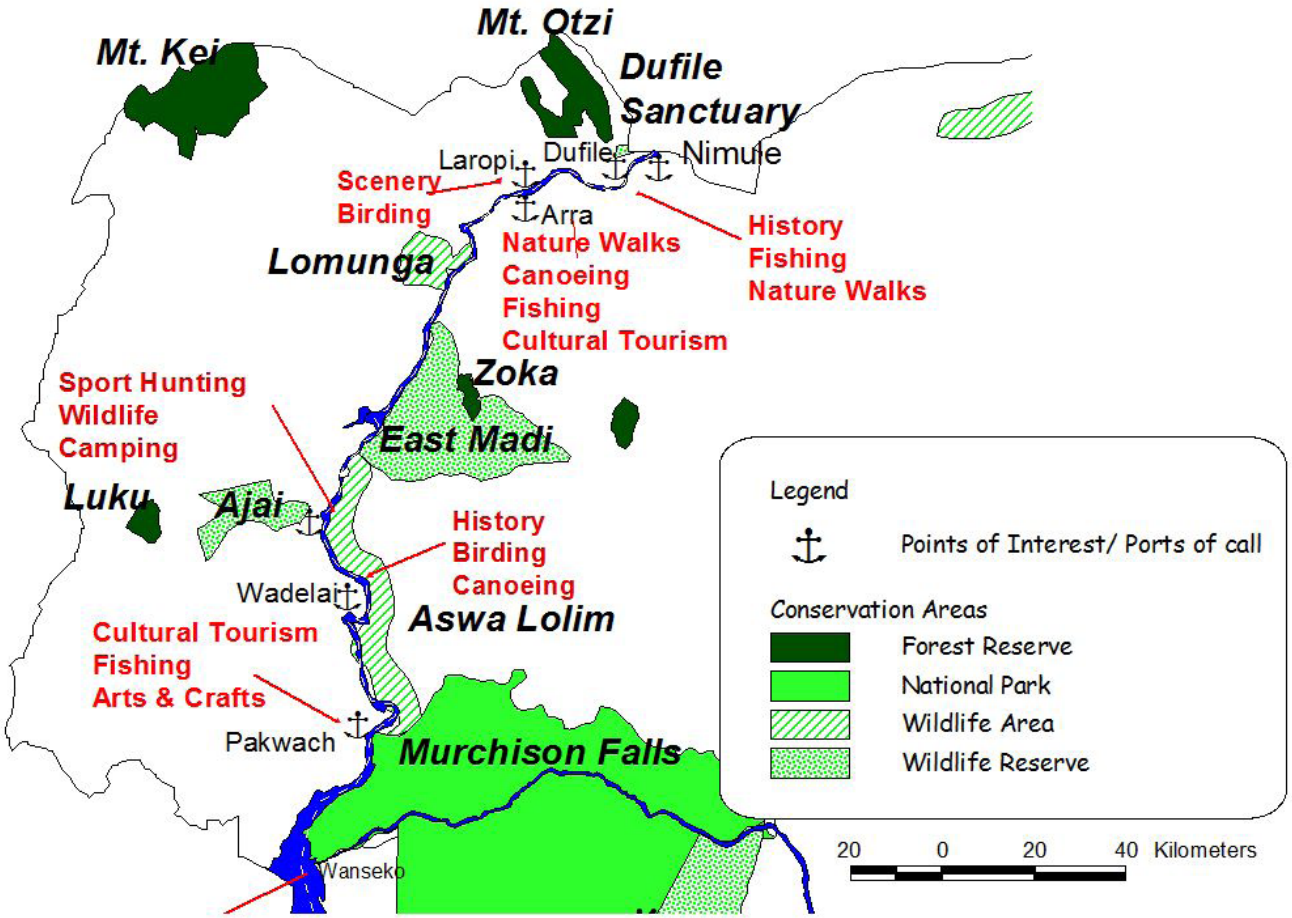
In conclusion, northern Uganda has a variety of attractions, some quite unique, but they remain largely unknown to potential tourists and most tour operators. With appropriate investment and proper attention from the industry's numerous stakeholders, tourism could be an important factor in the overall development of northern Uganda. Important next steps might include:

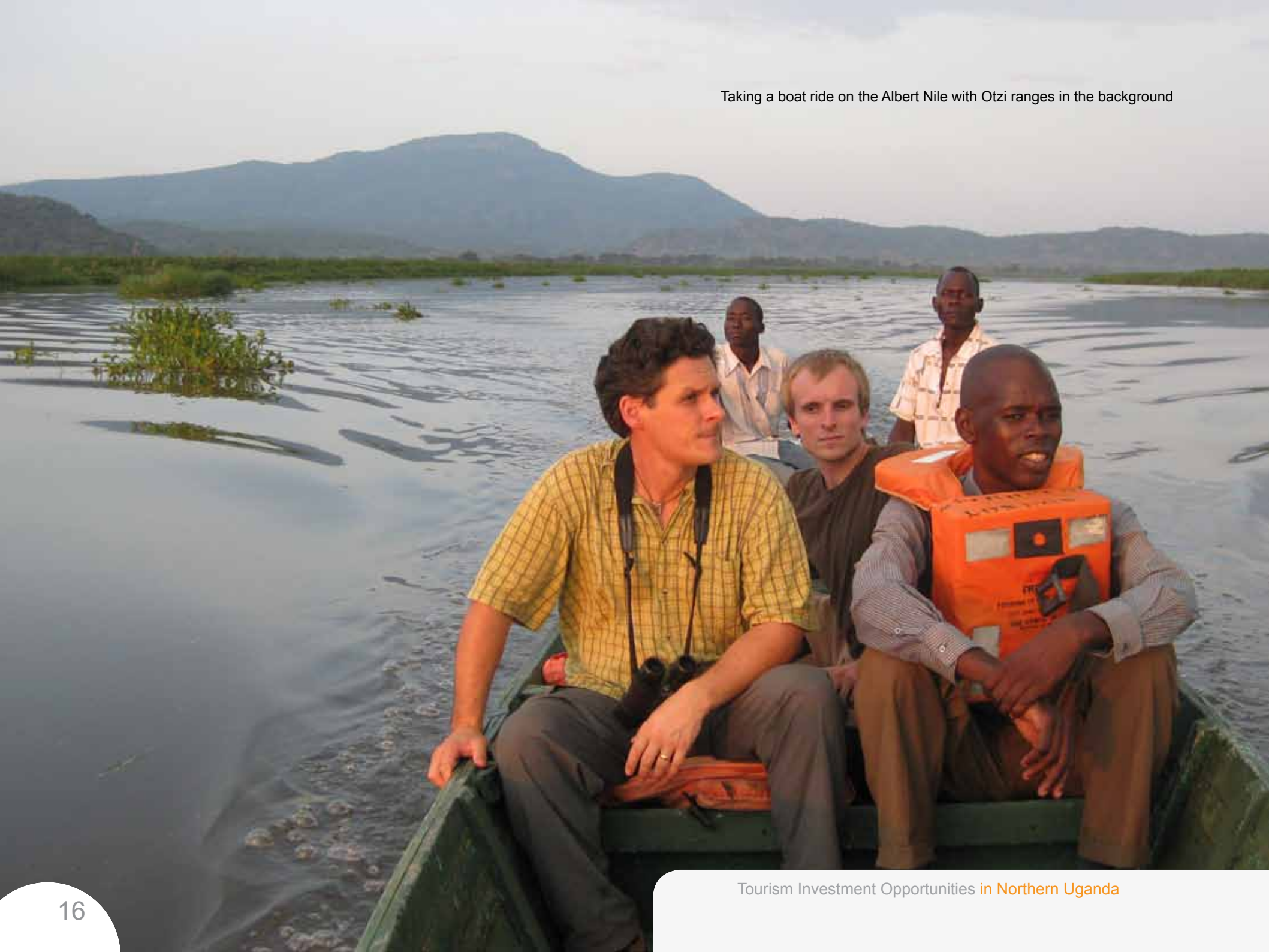
- Improvement of roads, signage, and extension of basic services such as water and electricity to enhance access to attractions and encourage private sector investment.
- A concerted effort to improve northern Uganda's image. This should involve a marketing campaign by the Uganda Tourism Board and/or other responsible regional institutions; the update of public data by diplomatic missions and aid agencies; and the swift correction of outdated information in journalistic reports by media.

View of the Albert Nile from the escarpment near Laropi, Moyo

Albert Nile

Perhaps above all other attractions in the region, the Albert Nile offers the most immediate potential for tourism in northern Uganda.





Taking a boat ride on the Albert Nile with Otzi ranges in the background

Navigable throughout its course, the Albert Nile flows 210 km from the north end of Lake Albert through wildlife reserves and past historical sites before reaching the border with Sudan. Given the mystique of the river, the rich history and the incredible landscape, this route could easily become an international tourism draw.

The journey along the river is peaceful and beautiful. Its papyrus-covered banks are home to many birds including Goliath Heron, Black Stork, and Rock Pranticole. Tourists can enjoy Arra Fishing Lodge's Shoebill spotting excursions around Arra and Laropi. One can expect to see hippos at Hippo Camp, buffalo and elephant within Amuru District as well as antelope and warthog in Ajai Wildlife Reserve. Farther along the Albert Nile at Wadelai and Dufile are the remains of forts from the colonial era. Visitors to these areas also may encounter elephants, which cross over from Nimule National Park in Sudan.

There are also several landmark historical sites along the Albert Nile. The area used to be governed by Emin Pasha who in 1878 was appointed by the Khedive of Egypt as Charles Gordon's successor as Governor of Equatoria comprising present day northern Uganda and Southern Sudan. Wadelai Station on the upper Nile near Lake Albert was established in 1885 after General Gordon was killed in Khartoum, forcing Emin Pasha and most of his forces to withdrew further south.

With appropriate development of stop-over facilities in selected ports of call, the Albert Nile could well be a stand-alone tourist destination. It also could be marketed as a scenic alternative to road travel from western Uganda and Murchison Falls National Park to northwestern Uganda. The river could serve as the anchor of a larger package of complementary activities involving cultural tourism, outdoor recreation and visits to historical sites. Another important consideration in the Albert Nile's development for tourism is its link to southern Sudan. While security concerns curtail tourist activity there at present, investors should be aware that southern Sudan's poor infrastructure makes Panjala in Dufile Sub County a natural future entry point to Nimule, Fola Falls and other areas of interest across the border.

.

Shoebill

Hippo sightings are common on the Albert Nile.

A view of the Albert Nile near Adjumani

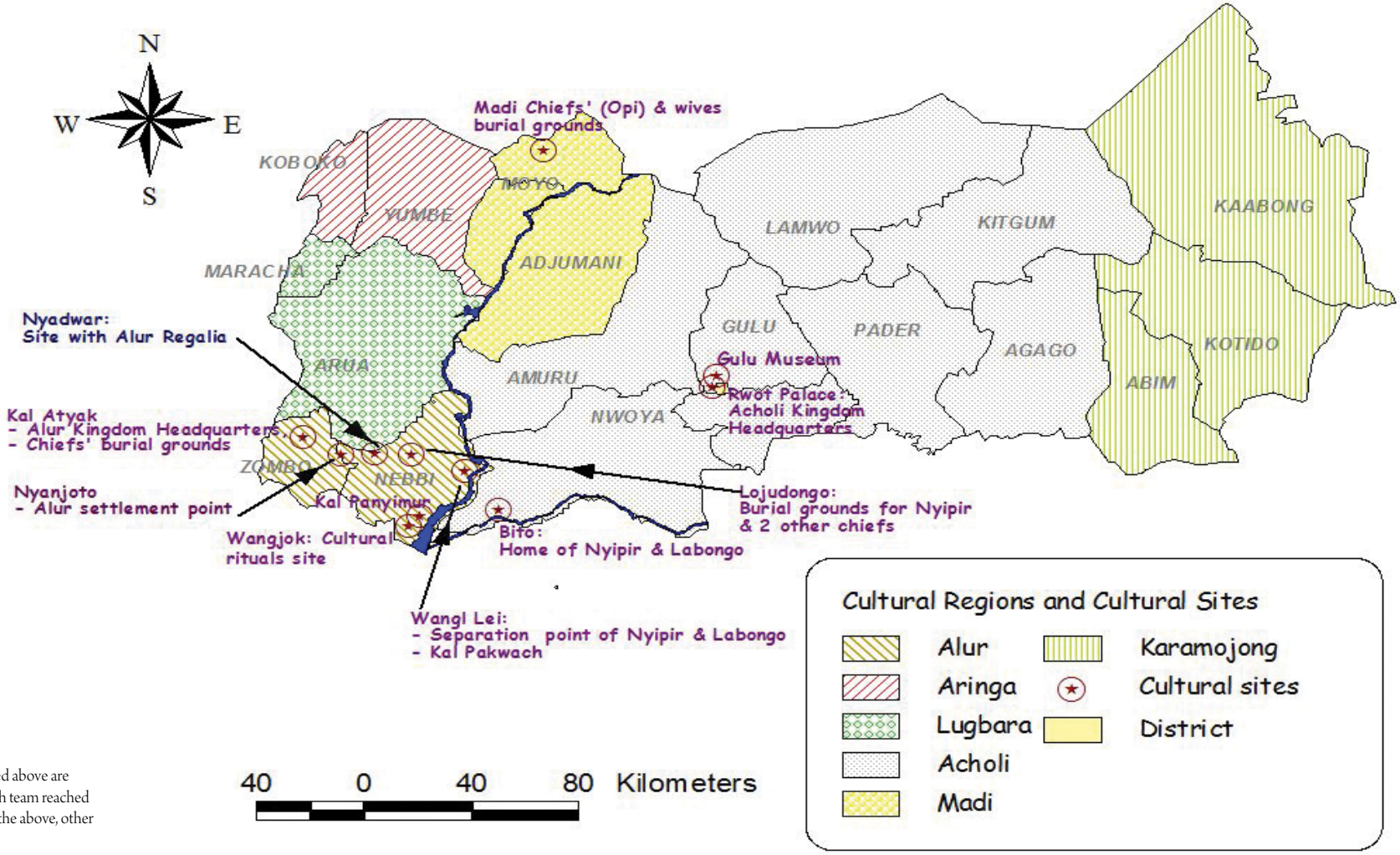
Rock formations along the Nile in Adjumani. Similar formations cover the adjacent landscape.

A view of Mt. Otzi from the Albert Nile

Acholi Bwola dancer

CULTURE

Northern Uganda's main ethnic groups – the Alur, Acholi, Lugbara, Madi, and Karamojong – offer a rich cultural tapestry to be explored and enjoyed. Except for the Karamojong, most of northern Uganda's tribes originated in southern Sudan and, while maintaining distinct languages and rituals, share a similar approach to music, arts & crafts and dance.



Note:
Cultural sites indicated above are those that the research team reached / visited. Apart from the above, other sites may exist.

Young Acholi dancers during a cultural festival in Lamwo

Alur and Acholi have common ancestry.
Legend suggests that Tiful and Nyipir separated from their brother Labongo at Wang Lei/Latong following the killing of Labongo's infant son by Nyipir. Labongo's son had swallowed a bead that Nyipir was given by an old lady when he went out in search of Labongo's spear which a wounded elephant ran away with. In an act of revenge, Nyipir killed Labongo's infant son. Following this event, Tiful and Nyipir moved with their followers including Lendu and Okebu to the highlands in the west, and their descendants are said to comprise the Alur. Acholi are descendants of Labongo, who remained on the eastern bank of the Nile.

Alur

The Alur inhabit the West Nile part of Uganda and occupy the districts of Nebbi and Zombo. However, unlike their neighbors who are Sudanic, the Alur are Luo and belong to the same language group as the Acholi.

The Alur are known for Otwenge dance. Otwenge literally means "elbow". The elbow's movement is emphasized both while playing the adungu and while performing the Otwenge dance. The dance is usually performed by young boys and girls. Annual events celebrated by the Alur include the coronation anniversary of His Majesty Ubimo on 30th October and a Convention on the 28th December, which brings together the Alur people from all over the world.

The Alur produce a number of crafts ranging from the traditional adungu, stools, pots, and baskets.

Alur woman in Pakwach selling cassava flour

Acholi

The Acholi live in the largest geographic area of northern Uganda (Agago, Amuru, Gulu, Kitgum, Lamwo, Nwoya, and Pader Districts). Some Acholi also live in Southern Sudan. The Acholi landscape is typical East African game country rolling grasslands with scattered trees, streams, and rock outcrops. The primary language of Acholi today is Luo, a western Nilotic language spoken by groups scattered across East Africa from southern Sudan to Tanzania.

Music plays a very central role in almost all activities of the Acholi, from garden work to domestic work such as cooking. The Acholi have the broadest selection of traditional dances, each suited to different occasions. The most common dances are the Bwola and Larakaraka. Bwola is a very rhythmic dance usually performed by older men and women in a circle representing a fence that surrounds the palace court. The Larakaraka is primarily a courtship dance that is performed during weddings. In Acholi, music and dance festivals are held annually during the dry season (late November to January).

The coronation anniversary for Lawii Rwodi (Paramount Chief) is held on 15th January of each year. Pots for cooking and serving food, baskets for various uses including storage constitute the major crafts produced.

Playing the Adungu

Young girls performing traditional Lugbara dance

Lugbara

The Lugbara live in Arua, Maracha, and adjoining districts. Like the Alur and Madi, this is one of the largest tribes inhabiting West Nile sub-region.

Legend has it that the Lugbara are descendants from the first creatures put on earth by Spirit (the Creator of Men). Spirit created a man (gboro-gboro) and a woman (meme), and then domestic livestock. Meme bore a boy and a girl, who were the ancestors of the Lugbara heroes, Jaki and Dribidu.

The Lugbara have a wide variety of traditional songs, riddles, folk tales, proverbs, musical instruments and oral literature. Gaze is a traditional dance of the Lugbara people which contains elements of movements of the dances in neighboring Congo. The Agwara (meaning trumpet) is another dance from the Lugbara and Kebu people, where men play trumpets as the women dance.

Pottery and baskets such as ivua (food basket), kuta (food cover), kubi (sauce pot), and ajiko (sauce for preparing millet flour), constitute the key arts and crafts produced by the Lugbara.

Woman winowing sorghum

Madi

The Madi are related to Lugbara and live in Adjumani and Moyo Districts in the extreme north bordering Sudan. They are Sudanic and originally belonged to the Moru Madi tribe of Southern Sudan.

Madi legend has it that the first ancestor was Madi, the son of Dimmo who came from the banks of the river Nile and settled at Lepfool. During the course of the Luo migration from Sudan, some Madi (called Pugari) who were settled in Lepfool dropped their language in favour of the Luo language, which is used in the area along with Madi language.

The Madi occupy an attractive area of Laropi and Arra where the Nile river ferry crosses between Adjumani and Moyo Districts. The area boasts attractive landscapes, including Mt. Otzi and surrounding hills, the river, and the unique rocky terrain on the Adjumani side of the river. There is potential for geology walks here, as the landscape is varied and fascinating.

Traditional dances include the kore, mure and vuli which are performed for different occasions. There is also a particular dance and accompanying songs for burial of elderly people and such a dance would last days. Madi arts and crafts are similar to those of the Lugbara consisting namely of pottery and baskets.

Hand-woven Madi winower and basket

Ik children and youngsters singing and dancing.

Karamojong

The nomadic pastoralist Karamojong offer a unique cultural experience within Uganda. Their love of cattle, their dances, their colorful traditional dress and arts & crafts are reminiscent of the Maasai and other pastoral people along the Rift Valley and South Sudan. Karamojong speak a Nilotic language and belongs to the Atkerin group (Hamites).

The origins of the word Karamoja are quite uncertain but a legend from Teso and Karamoja itself asserts that the names Karamoja and Iteso (another ethnic group further south) were derived during their migrations within Uganda. In their early migration, the Atkerin people have come by way of Karamoja. Those who remained in the area called Karamoja live today came to be known as the Karamojong. The term is said to have been derived form the phrase "akarima ajong"- meaning "the old men have got tired"- because the Karamojong did not continue their migration as the other Atkerin people.

The Karamojong are settled in the north-eastern part of Uganda in Abim, Amudat, Kaabong, Kotido, Moroto, Nakapiripirit and Napak Districts. Several small ethnic groups live among the Karamojong people in the far northeast and these include the Dodoth in the north, the Jie in the central region, and, in the south, a cluster of closely related ethnic groups known as Bokora, Matheniko, and Pian all of whom are referred to generally as the Karamojong. Other groups include the Pokot and the Ik. The rather small community of Ik live on Mount Morungole in relative isolation after having been evicted from the fertile Kidepo Valley upon establishment of the Kidepo Valley National park in the 1960s.

Music and dance are a crucial aspect of the Karamojong lifestyle. The Karamojong dance is performed by jumping up high repeatedly and is also prevalent among the Langi, Turkana, and Maasai. Dances include the Edonga which is performed with the men clapping and stomping in unison as they chant out a beat. Other dances performed in a similar fashion include the Ekaro and Naleyo dances.

Karamojong arts & crafts include colorfully designed jewelry ranging from wrist bands, anklets and belts. They also produce the unique stools and walking sticks.

Some tourism activity now occurs in Karenga, a Karamajong community to the south of Kidepo Valley National Park. The local communities (mostly Dodoth) are somewhat distinct from other Karamajong groups in that they have transitioned away from their nomadic pastoralist origins toward a more agrarian lifestyle. The town is attractively built on the side of a hill with broad views into the Kidepo Valley and has potential to capitalize on the now-safe overland route to Kidepo Valley. The drive from Orom to Karenga is spectacular in itself passing through a landscape of rock domes and spires. This town would be an ideal location for a Karamajong cultural centre, as well as for community-based lodging.

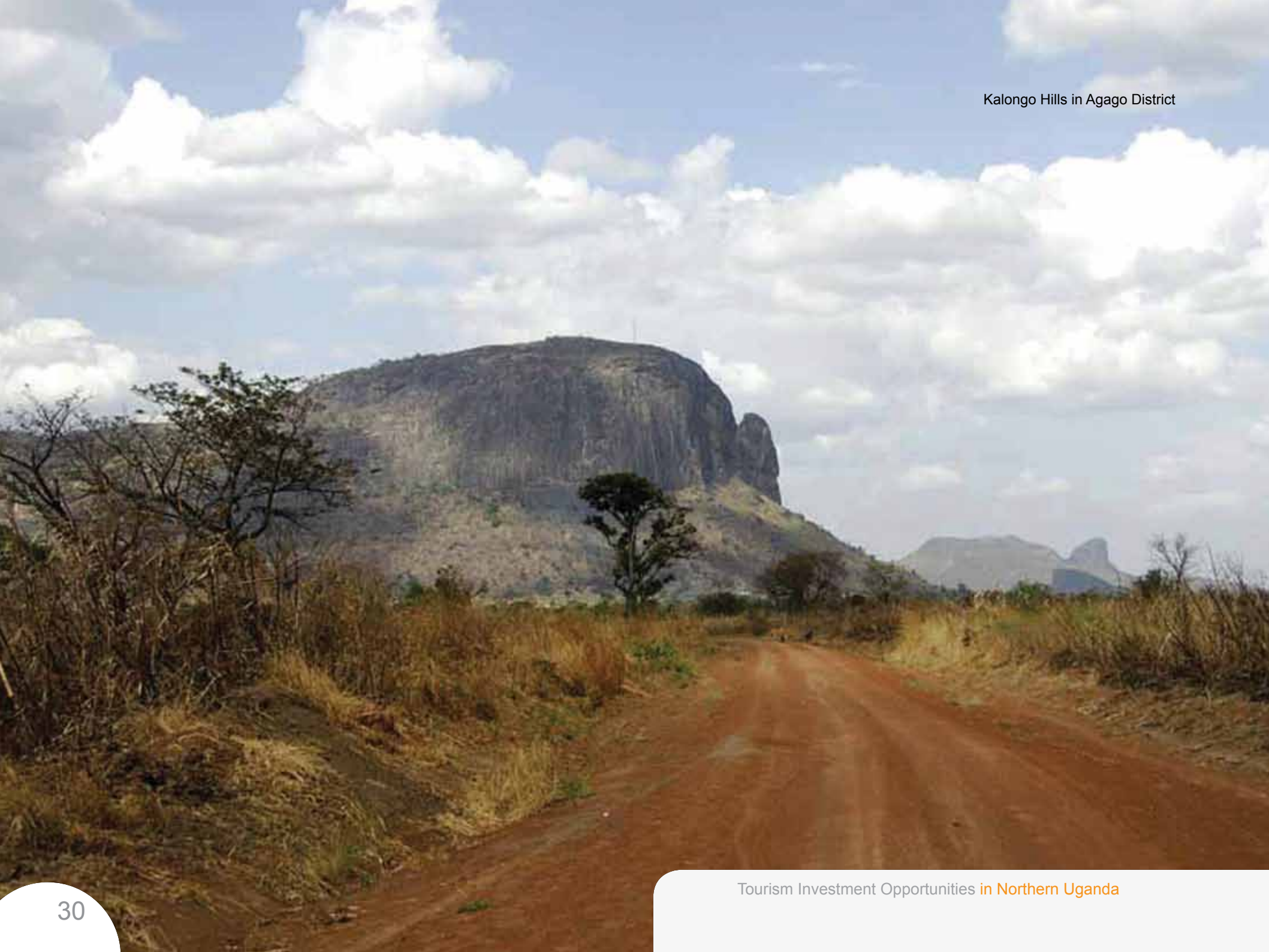
Karamojong youngster with head covered in a suka.

Karamojong youth

A traditional Madi homestead with a granary in the foreground (Mt.Otzi, Moyo)

Turkana girl near Moroto wearing her traditional jewelry

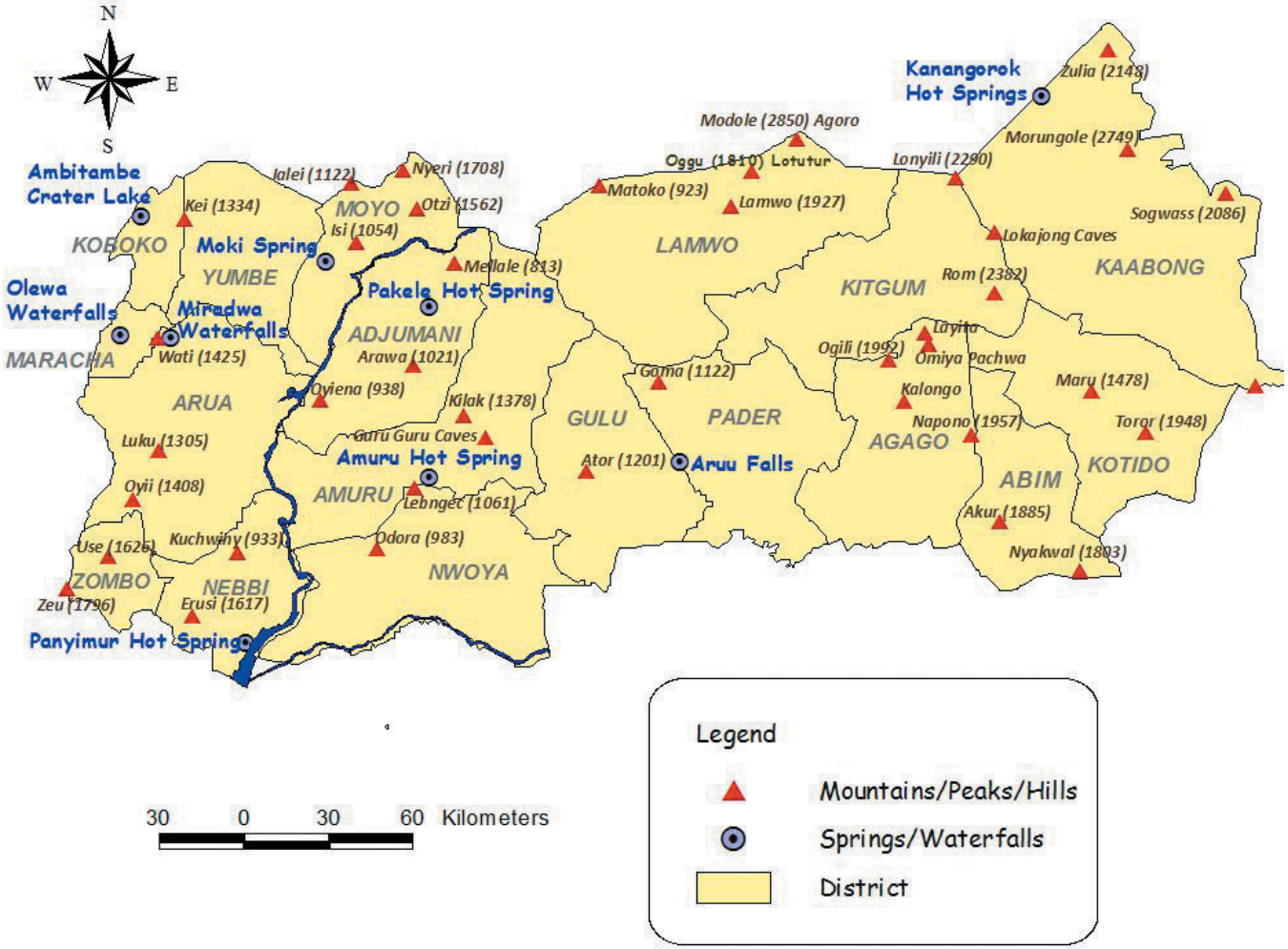
Construction of a hut in an Acholi village



Kalongo Hills in Agago District

LANDSCAPES

Whether one is interested in physical activities such as hiking or climbing, exploration or tranquil encounters with nature, northern Uganda's beautiful landscapes offer something for everyone.



Savanna landscape from the Larubi Escarpment in Gulu District

Northern Uganda offers an impressive variety of landscape attractions, ranging from mountain ranges, forests and rivers to waterfalls and springs, which could as interesting stopping points for visitors traveling between Murchison Falls and Kidepo Valley National Parks. Highlights of the area's attractions are provided below.

Lakes and Water Falls

In Arua district, visitors can visit the Ambitambe Crater Lake and Olewa Falls. Other water falls include Aruu Falls in Pader District, Dubu (considered sacred) and Kochi Waterfalls in Yumbe District, and Miradwa Waterfalls in Maracha District.

Mountains, Forests, Hills and Caves (by district)

Adjumani: Zoka Forest

Agago: Paimol Caves, Kalongo Hills

Amuru: Kilak, Guruguru Hills (the site of the famous Lamogi rebellion of 1911)

Arua: Mt. Kei, Mt.Wati (home to a Lugbara ancestor), Liru Hill (ancestral home of Kakwa people)

Kaabong: Nyangea Napore, Morungole, Labwor, Lokajong Caves

Kitgum: Rom

Lamwo: Agoro Agu, Potika/Lotutur

Moyo: Metu Hills and Caves, Era Forest, Mt.Otzi

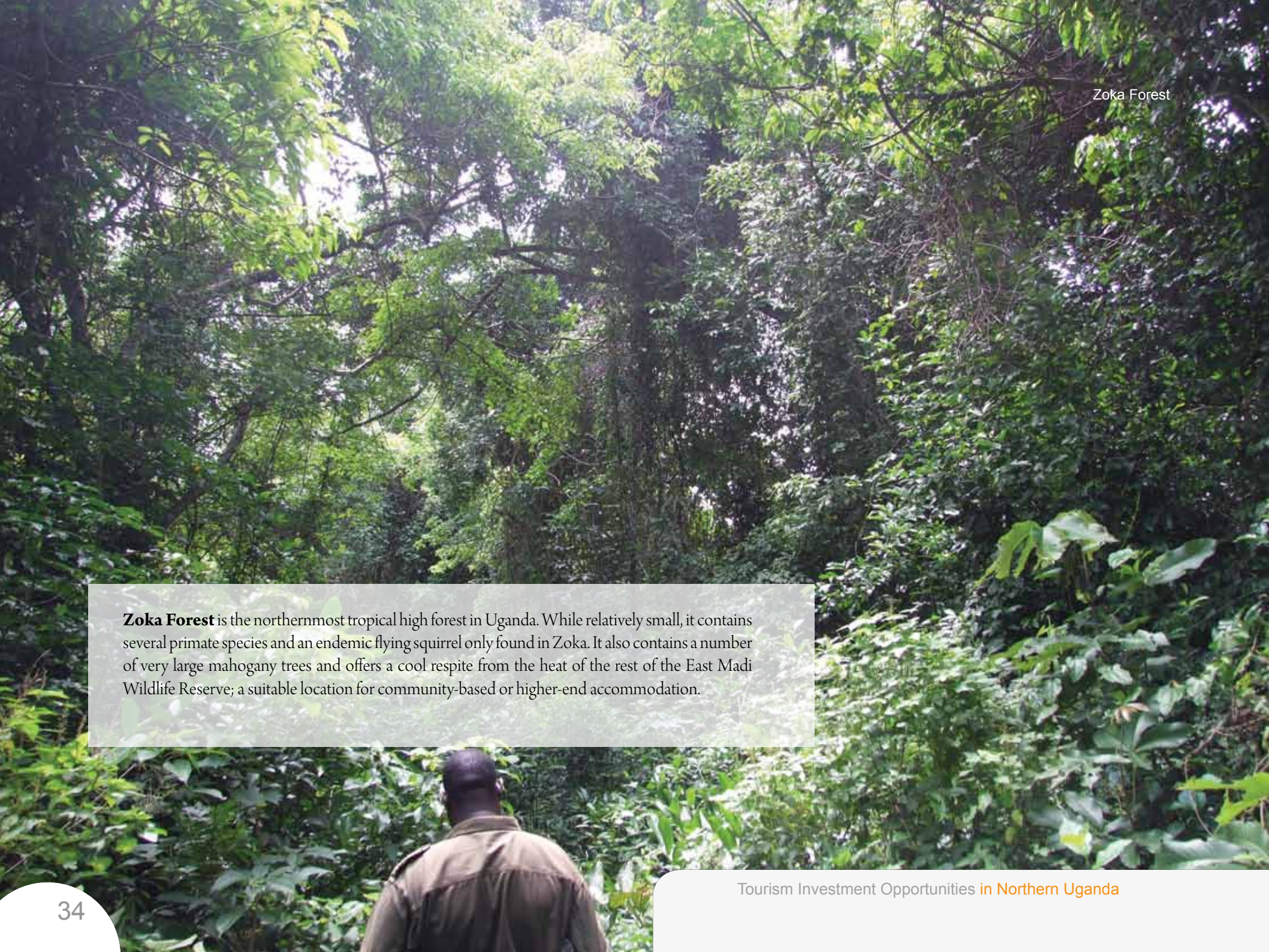
Springs

Moyo: Moki Springs, Metu Springs

Appropriate investments in skilled guides and well-placed camping sites or other accommodation facilities throughout the area's hills and mountains, waterfalls, rivers and lakes would open the door for visitors to enjoy hiking, rock climbing, birding and fishing. More ambitious investors might consider developing spa facilities at one of the area's natural hot springs (Amuru Pii in Panyimur, Nebbi; Amuru, and Pakele, Adjumani).

Aswa River

Morning view of Aruu Falls in Pader District



Zoka Forest

Zoka Forest is the northernmost tropical high forest in Uganda. While relatively small, it contains several primate species and an endemic flying squirrel only found in Zoka. It also contains a number of very large mahogany trees and offers a cool respite from the heat of the rest of the East Madi Wildlife Reserve; a suitable location for community-based or higher-end accommodation.

Dramatic rock formations in Agago District

View from Agoro Agu Mountains of the surrounding landscape

Forest cover in Mt.Otzi forest reserve

Mt. Otzi Forest Ranges are some of the most scenic mountains in northern Uganda. The mountain overlooks the confluence of Achwa River with the Albert Nile as it passes into Sudan. Mt. Otzi is adjacent to Nimule National Park in Southern Sudan and Dufile Wildlife Sanctuary in Moyo District, thus combining a wide variety of elevations and ecosystems, including the area's highest point (Nyeri, 1,708 m asl) offering vistas of both Uganda and Sudan. It has the advantage of being higher and cooler than the surrounding land, so there is potential for hiking and mountain biking.

The mountain ranked tenth out of 65 forest reserves in Uganda in species diversity and rarity of species. The Nyeri range is home to an isolated chimpanzee population, and is the sole habitat for chimpanzees in northern Uganda. Its vicinity to the Nile makes Mt.Otzi are easily reachable and attractive destination to enjoy variety of outdoor activities.

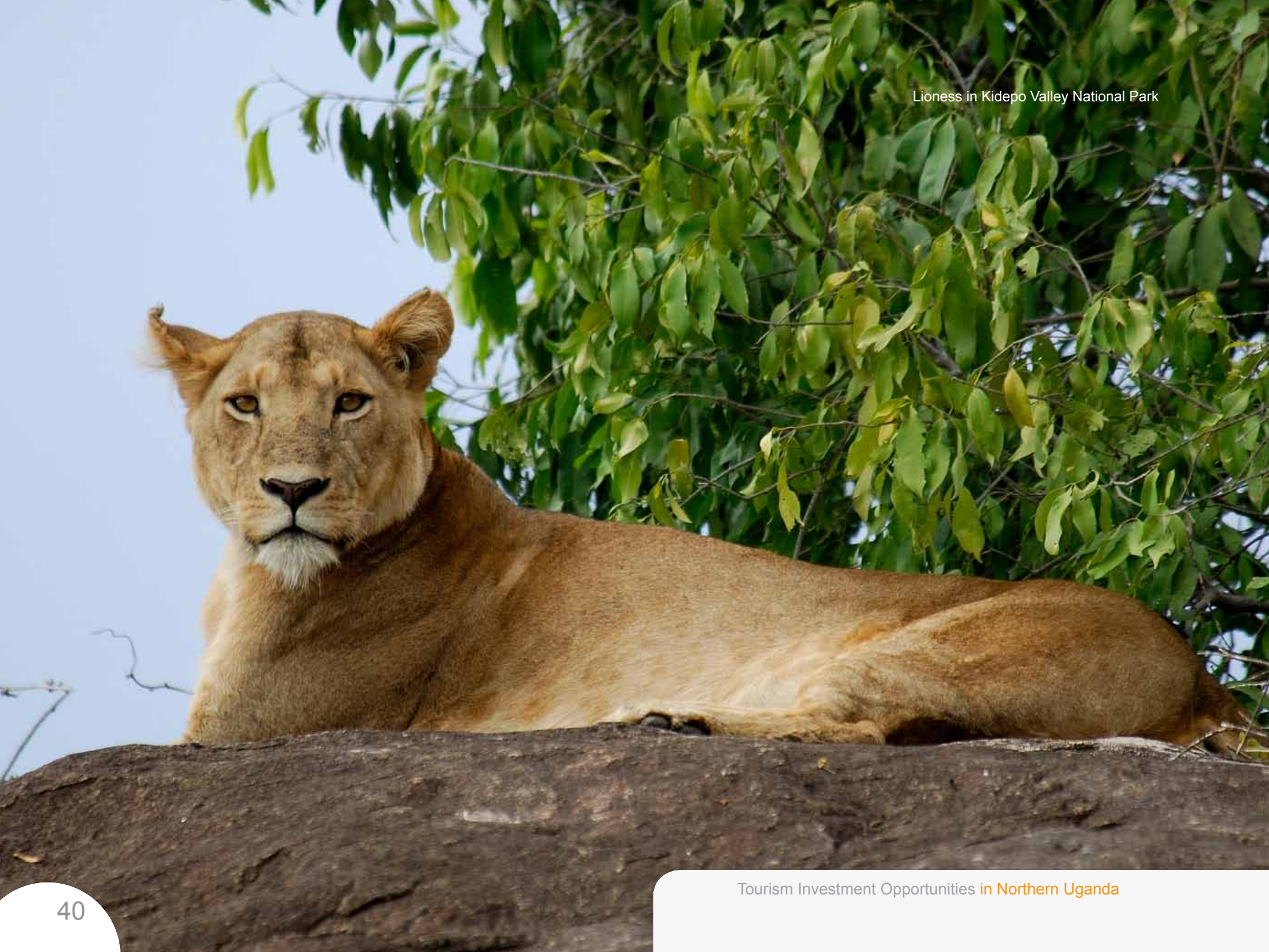
Sunset on the Nile in Arra, Adjumani

Landscape in Karenga on the way to Kidepo Valley National Park

Jackson's Hartebeest and Zebras in Kidepo Valley National Park

WILDLIFE

Northern Uganda is rich in bird- and wildlife, offering visitors an enticing alternative to the common safari circuits. The variety of bird species in Uganda is one of the greatest in the world and there is an impressive array of wildlife. The relative newness of the safari industry in the region means that visitors enjoy a more peaceful and personal experience with nature.



Lioness in Kidepo Valley National Park

Northern Uganda is home to two national parks (Murchison Falls and Kidepo Valley), several wildlife reserves (East Madi Wildlife Reserve, Ajai Wildlife Reserve, Matheniko Wildlife Reserve, Bokora Corridor Wildlife Reserve, Karenga Community Wildlife Management Area, Dufile Wildlife Sanctuary), and several areas traditionally reserved for wildlife and hunting but currently not gazetted (Lipan, Tim Padwat, Lomunga, Aswa-Lolim, and others).

While infrastructure for tourists exists in Kidepo Valley National Park, much more can be done to accommodate existing and potential visitors for game viewing, bird watching, outdoor recreation and cultural tourism. In northern Uganda's wildlife and forest reserves and other conservation areas in particular, the door is wide open for tourism-related investment.

Kidepo Valley National Park

Kidepo Valley is located in Karamoja's northern Kaabong District bordering Sudan and Kenya. It was declared a national park in 1960 and encompasses 1,442 sq km of magnificent rolling savanna plains nestled within the Nyangea Napore and Morungole Mountains and the Kidepo and Narus Rivers. Visitors will enjoy the park's pleasant climate and impressive biodiversity. Among the 86 mammal species present, three of Africa's "Big Five" (elephant, lion, buffalo) are commonly seen. Kidepo and Karamoja also offer one's sole opportunity in Uganda to see the bat-eared fox, striped hyena, aardwolf, caracal and cheetah as well as what has been confirmed to be a West African crocodile (sub)species. Bird enthusiasts will enjoy the park's 472 bird species, comprising about 47% of all of Uganda's recorded bird species with several new species that were recently added to the list. Many of these species are confined to northern and eastern Uganda and are not effectively conserved anywhere else in the country. The new identified species include: Common Quail, Red-fronted Warbler, Pygmy Batis, Eastern Violet-backed Sunbird, Heuglin's Wheatear and Beaudouin's Snake-Eagle.

Other Wildlife Areas

Ajai Wildlife Reserve has 120 recorded bird species, including Pel's fishing owl and the Shoebill as well as White-crested Turaco, Red-throated Bee-eater, Black-breasted Barbet, and White-cheeked Oliveback. The Ugandan Government is actively planning the reintroduction of white rhinoceros in Ajai as well as buffalo, Jackson's hartebeest and plains zebra. **East Madi** Wildlife Reserve boasts flora and fauna similar to Murchison Falls National Park and its management has recently been awarded to a private operator. The presence of lodging in East Madi will create an ideal overnight stopover for boat trips from Murchison Falls National Park or Pakwach via the Wadelai Fort. There is also good birding along the river and within the reserve itself. East Madi is also part of the elephant migration corridor which both creates tourism draw and increases the importance of protecting this area.

Along with its opportunities for outdoor activities, **Mt. Otzi** Central Forest Reserve contains impressive biodiversity, including seven tree species, three butterflies and one small mammal not found elsewhere in Uganda. **Agoro-Agu** Central Forest Reserve is home to a bamboo forest as well as insect and bird species unique within Uganda. Both **Lomunga** (in Moyo) and **Lipan** (in Kitgum) Wildlife Areas are home to wildlife which can recover under new form of management such as community conservancies with private sector involvement.

Uganda Kobs in Murchison Falls National Park. They can be found in several other wildlife reserves and areas throughout northern Uganda.

Ostrich in Kidepo Valley National Park

Elephant in Kidepo Valley National Park

Little is known about the wildlife that inhabits northern Uganda's unprotected areas. At present, these areas do not have the variety and density of wildlife and birdlife to make them attractive safari destinations. However, with appropriate investments in stop-over facilities and services, superb locations for outdoor recreational activities can be created. Areas like **Aswa-Lolim** (former Game Reserve) and **Lipan** Controlled Hunting Area could serve as links between gazetted protected areas and are good locations for sport hunting. **Tim Padwat** Wildlife Area in Lamwo provides important connectivity to surrounding national parks and forest reserves and is inhabited by the endangered L'hoest's monkey.

Forward-thinking concessionaires should consider ways to introduce adequate paths and trails within the reserves and sanctuaries in order to link them into a broader Murchison Falls National Park circuit in the future.

Buffalo in Kidepo Valley National Park

Some other interesting facts about nongazetted wildlife areas:

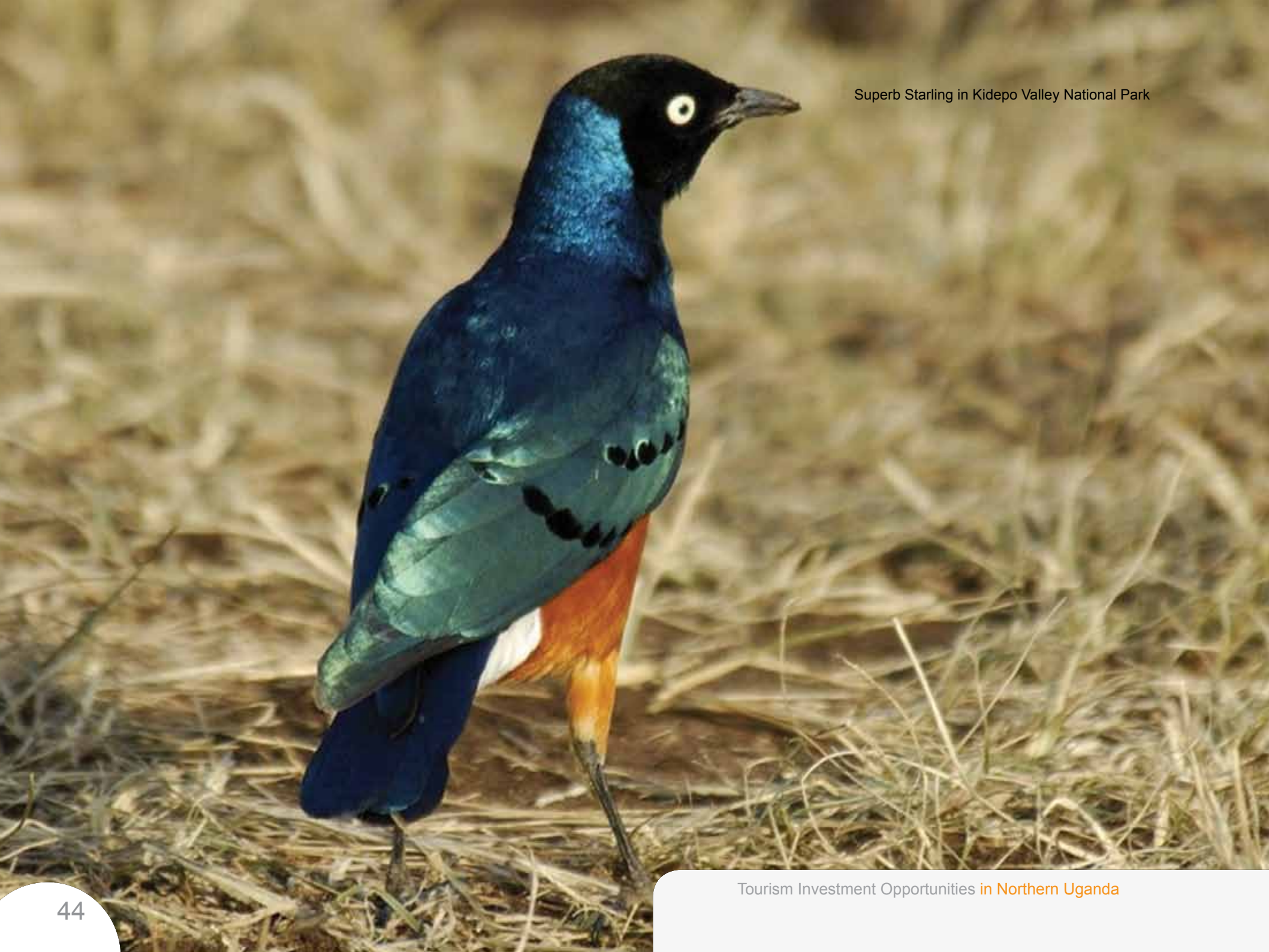
Karenga Community Wildlife Area connects to Kidepo Valley National Park and provides important habitats for wildlife migrating outside of the park in search of pasture and water. The area also offers magnificent scenery of the surrounding Nyangea Napore and Rom mountain ranges.

Lomunga occupies approximately 18,400 hectares and is reported to have varied populations of wildlife and bird species. Until the late 1960's it was home to Northern White Rhinos in Uganda.

Lipan Controlled Hunting Area occupies approximately 89,856 hectares in Kitgum District towards the border with South Sudan. Lipan represents a critical habitat for landscape connectivity between Kidepo Valley and Agoro-Agu landscapes. Wildlife populations exist and there have been discussions about offering a concession for sport hunting in this area.

Ome and Apa Hunting Corridors were part of the degazetted Aswa Lolim Game Reserve and Kilak Community Hunting Area. They lie on the east bank of the Albert Nile on high rolling hills cut by many rivers, such as the Aswa and the Lolim, from which the former game reserve derived its name. The area provides critical connectivity for wildlife between Murchison Falls National Park and E.Madi Wildlife Reserve.

Patas Monkey is found only in northern Uganda



Superb Starling in Kidepo Valley National Park

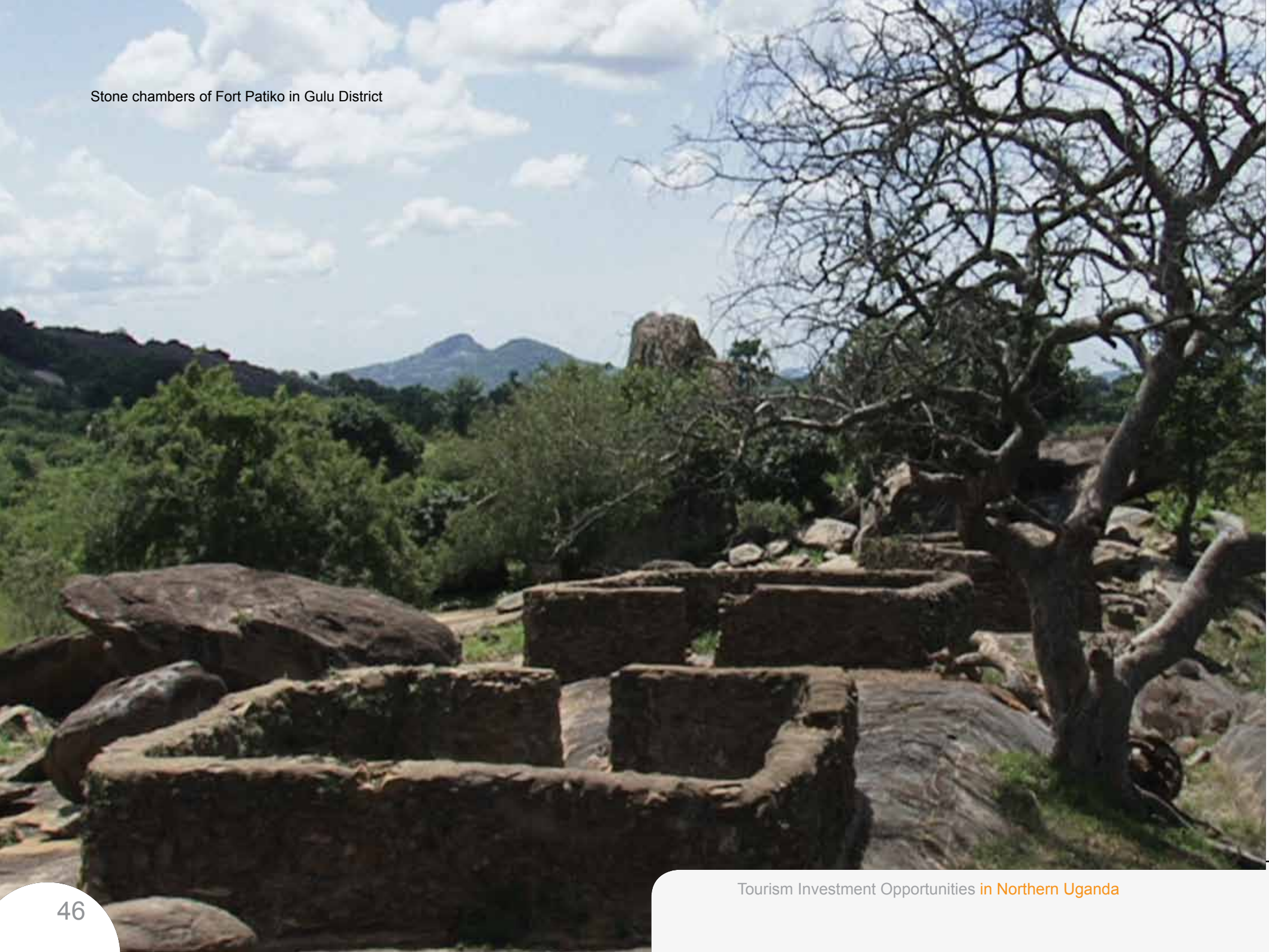
Birds of Kidepo Valley

Rainy Heron

Abyssinian Roller

Red-Cheeked Cordonbleu

Beaudouin's Snake-Eagle

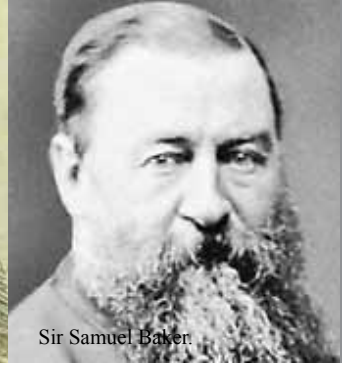


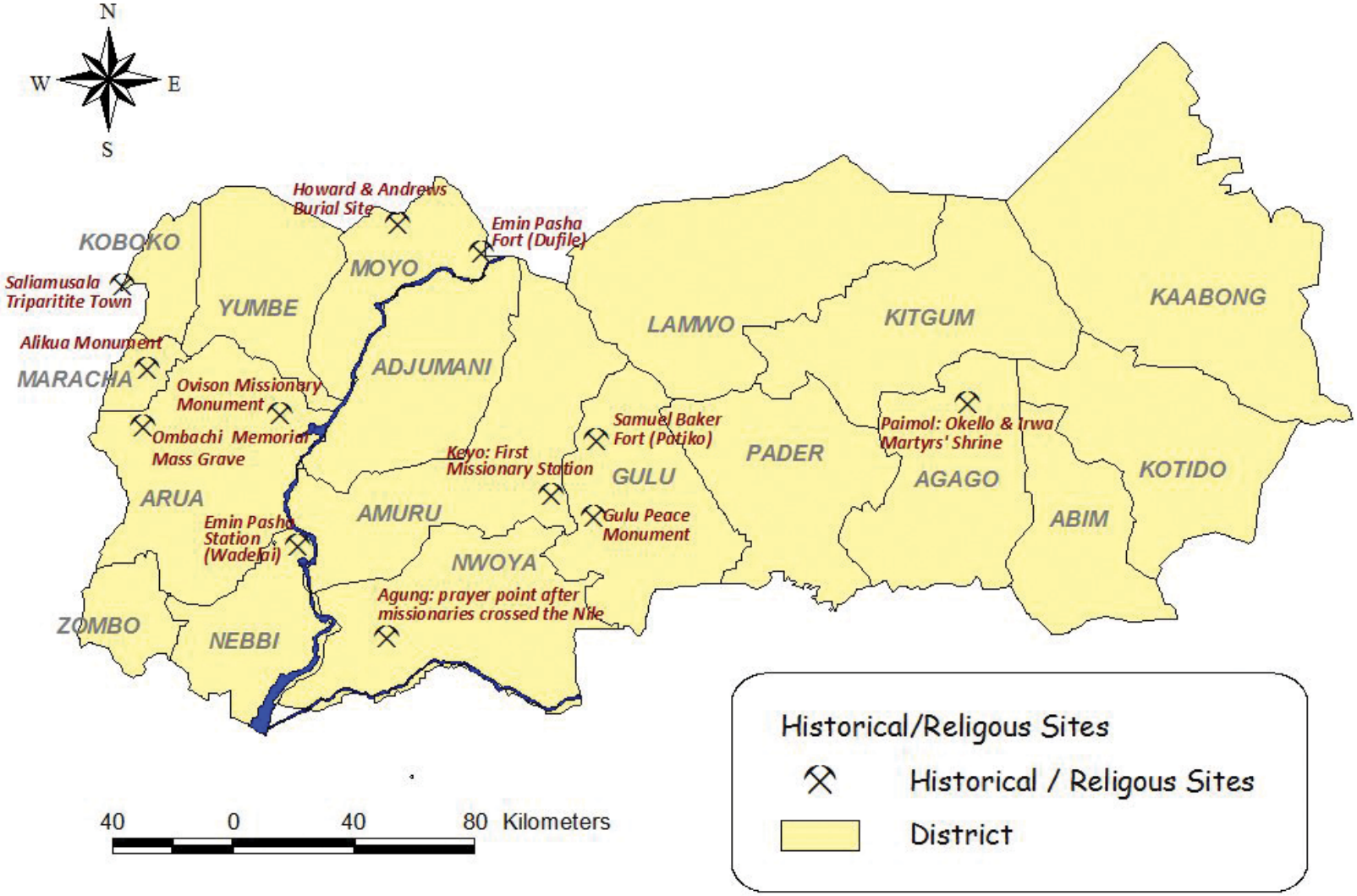
Stone chambers of Fort Patiko in Gulu District

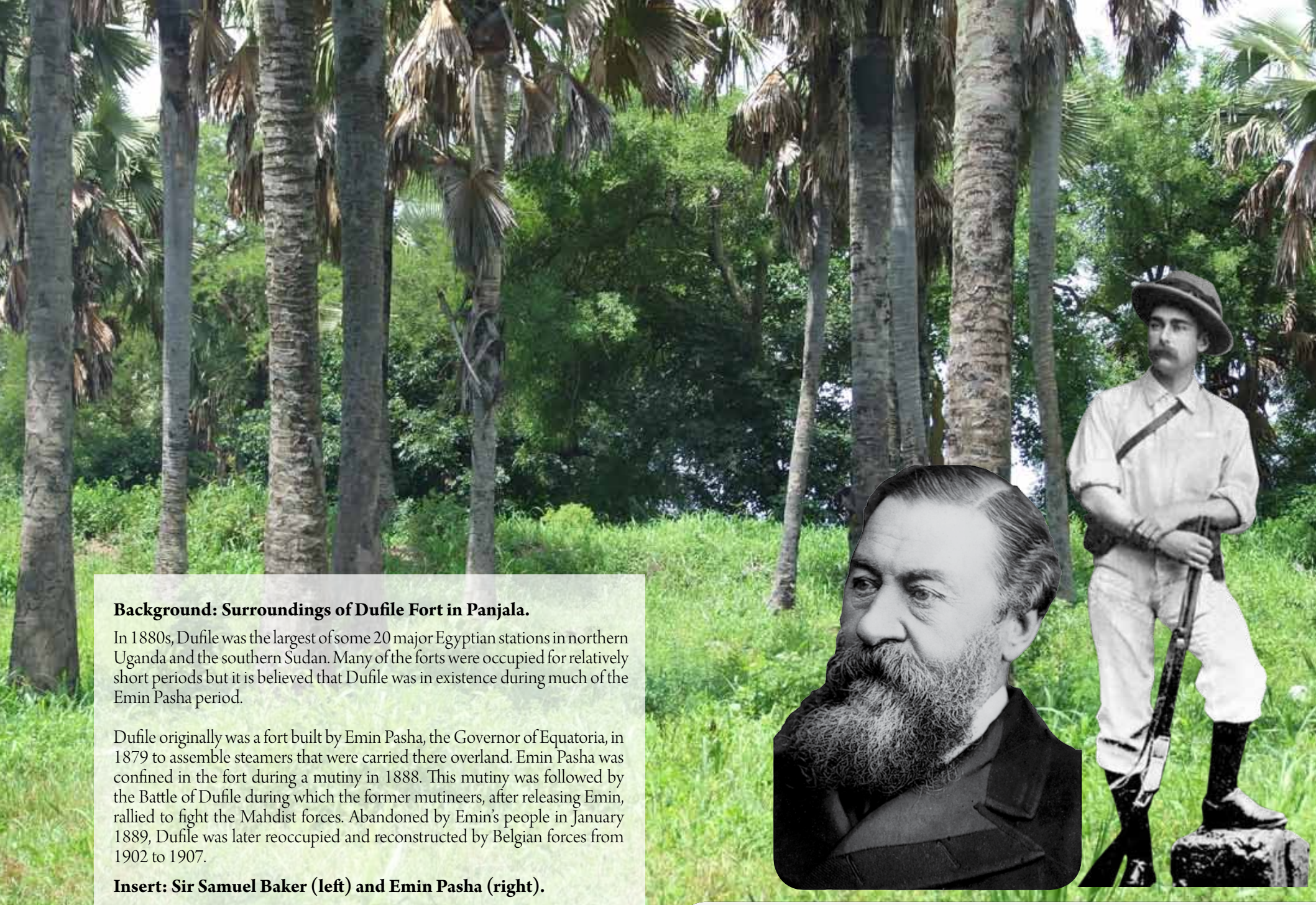
Historical Monuments and Sites

The Nile River has attracted explorers, colonial representatives, traders and missionaries to northern Uganda for centuries, providing today's visitors unique opportunities to explore various forts, historical sites and other points of interest.

Emin Pasha.


Sir Samuel Baker.





Background: Surroundings of Dufile Fort in Panjala.

In 1880s, Dufile was the largest of some 20 major Egyptian stations in northern Uganda and the southern Sudan. Many of the forts were occupied for relatively short periods but it is believed that Dufile was in existence during much of the Emin Pasha period.

Dufile originally was a fort built by Emin Pasha, the Governor of Equatoria, in 1879 to assemble steamers that were carried there overland. Emin Pasha was confined in the fort during a mutiny in 1888. This mutiny was followed by the Battle of Dufile during which the former mutineers, after releasing Emin, rallied to fight the Mahdist forces. Abandoned by Emin's people in January 1889, Dufile was later reoccupied and reconstructed by Belgian forces from 1902 to 1907.

Insert: Sir Samuel Baker (left) and Emin Pasha (right).

Explorers

A number of monuments or sites in the region originate from the 19th century. These include:

- Emin Pasha and Charles Gordon's Fort at Dufile in Moyo District
- Emin Pasha's Station at Wadelai in Nebbi District
- Sir Samuel Baker's Fort at Patiko in Gulu District
- Alikua Pyramids in Maracha District. A monument erected by the Belgians commemorating their places of occupation during 1900 -1914.
- Graves of Andrew and Howard (British air surveyors) whose airplane crashed in 1931 at Moyo town
- Vurra Customs Monument. East African customs at the border of Uganda and Congo built in 1937 after the assassination of Prime Minister Patrick Lumumba 1961.
- Saliamusala in Koboko District, a tripartite border point between Uganda, Congo and Sudan.

Sadly, the monuments, forts and other historical evidence of past visitors have fallen into serious disrepair. The sites have been marked for conservation by the government's Department of Museum and Monuments and, while they have limited potential to attract mainstream tourists, they would appeal to niche markets or domestic visitors such as school and church groups. In addition, many of them are located in beautiful settings and could be transformed into combined historical sites and tourist stop-overs, with appropriate investments in camping facilities, tourist information centres, arts & crafts shops and informative signage.

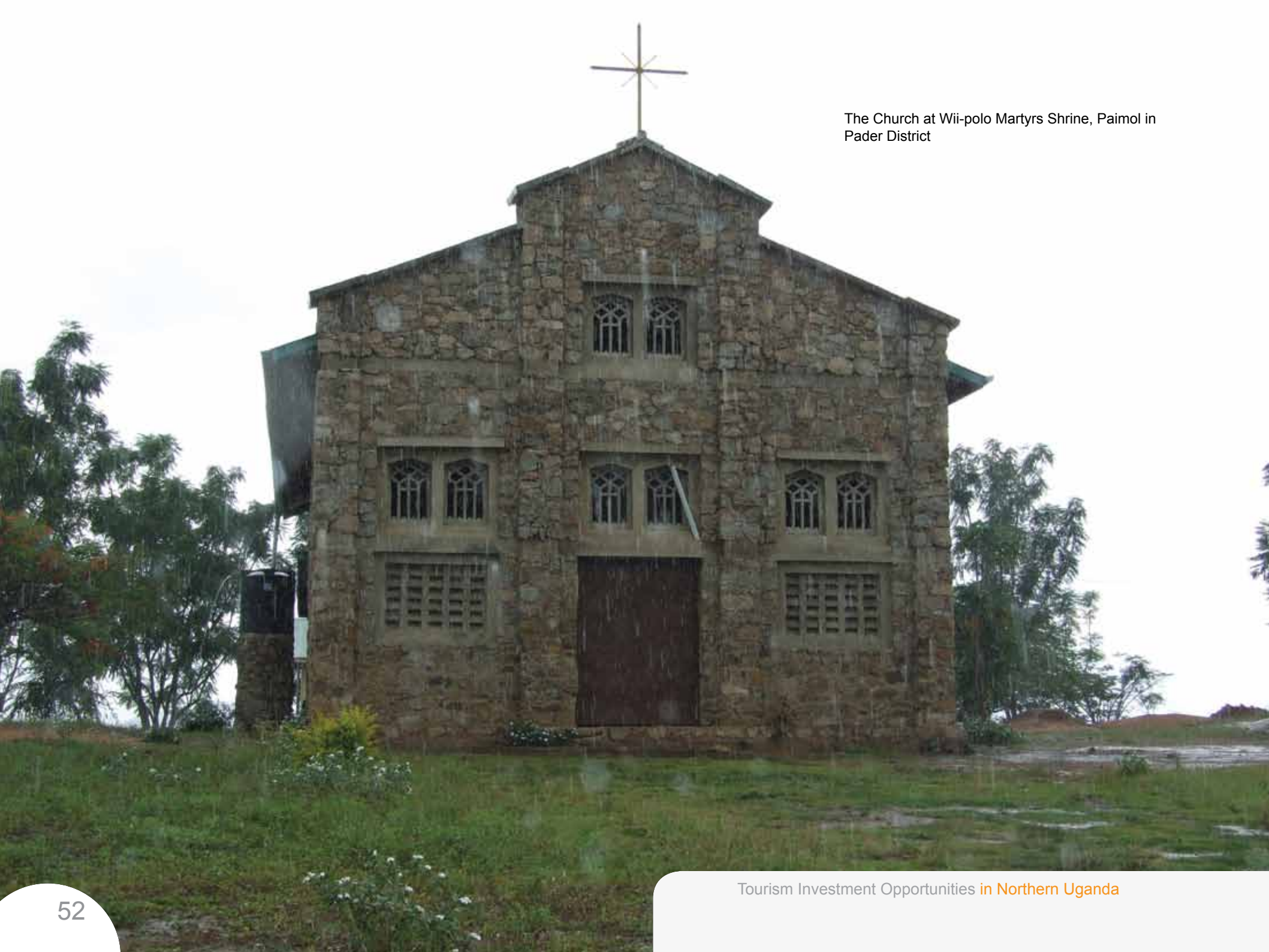
Alikua Pyramids in Maracha District

Surroundings of Fort Patiko

View of the area surrounding Fort Patiko

Remains of Fort Patiko

Borassus palms at Panjala (Dufile) within Emin Pasha's Fort



The Church at Wii-polo Martyrs Shrine, Paimol in Pader District

Religion

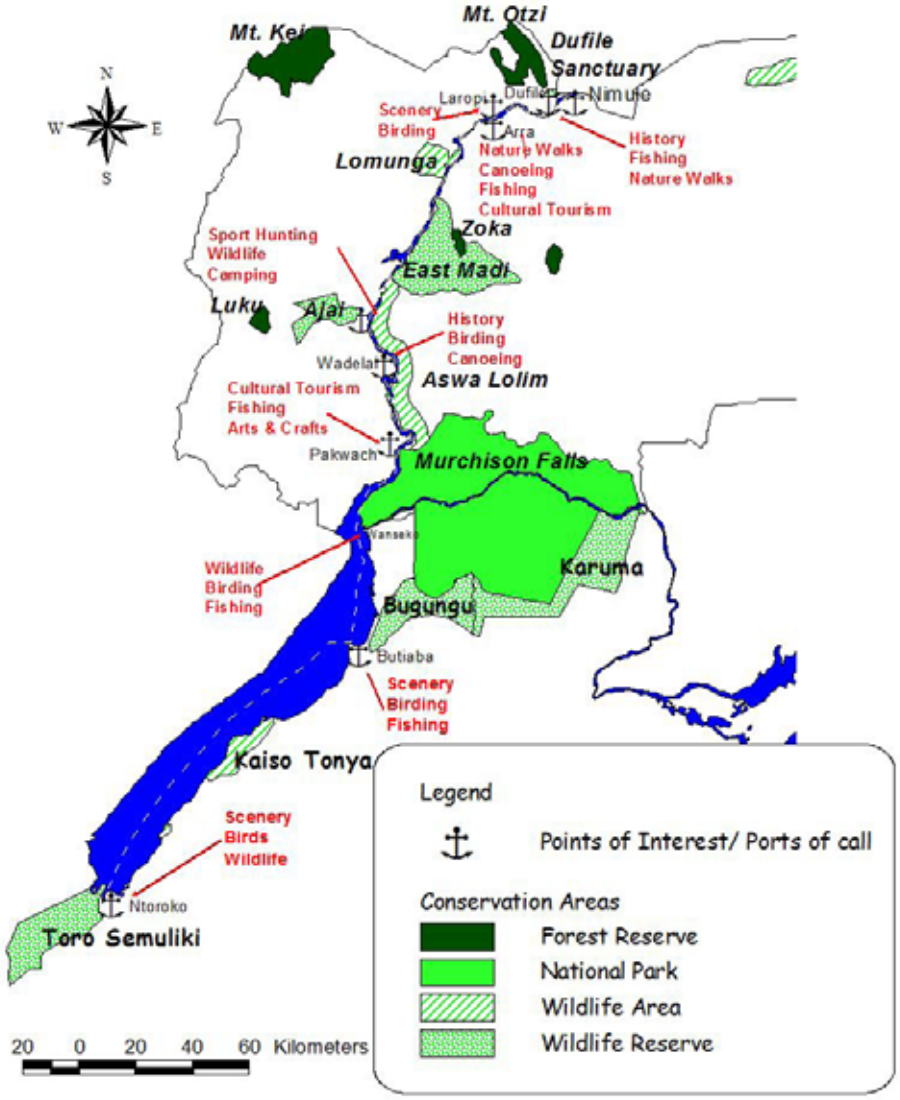
The historical site with perhaps the most potential to be developed for tourism is Wii-Polo Martyr's Shrine in Paimol in Pader District. In the early 20th century, Paimol was located on a route used heavily by Arab traders and Islam was starting to take root. Two young Catholic Comboni Missionaries from Kitgum, Daudi Okelo and Jildo Irwa, were sent to minister in Paimol. Despite serious threats, they refused to give up their work and consequently were killed in October 1918. Each year on 20th October, hundreds of Ugandans as well as southern Sudanese, Kenyans and Italians arrive in Paimol as pilgrims but have no stop-over facilities to support them. It is believed that Wii-polo Martyr's Shrine could be developed into something similar to the Uganda Martyr's Shrine in Namugongo, which draws thousands of pilgrims, including hundreds of foreign visitors, and is now marketed by the Uganda Tourism Board.

Grave of Daudi Okello and Jildo Irwa

Tomb house for Daudi Okello and Jildo Irwa

Potential Trails

covering Cultural, Landscape, Historical, and Wildlife Attractions in northern Uganda



Water-based Trail

Day 1
Ntoroko to Butiaba

- Embark on a cruise at Ntoroko for those coming from Semliki, Kibaale and other western Uganda circuits
- Stop at Butiaba, possibility of a drive to Budongo Forest Reserve (or Murchison Falls National Park if overnight stay)
- Port of call at Wanseko
- Overnight stay at Murchison Falls NP or Pakwach

Day 2
Pakwach to Wadelai/Ajai

- Wanglei (Nyipir & Labongo separation point)
- Wildlife and birdwatching along the Nile along Aswa Lolim and E.Madi Wildlife Reserve shores.
- Emin Pasha station at Wadelai
- Overnight stay at Ajai with game viewing in the evening or the following morning.

Day 3
Ajai to Arra

- Sport fishing and canoeing
- Bird watching especially for Shoebill & Giant King Fisher
- Village/nature walks, or homestead visits
- Horseback riding in Arra
- Boat ride to Icheri Island to view hippos, birds
- Overnight stay at Arra Fishing Lodge

Day 4
Arra/Laropi to Dufile

- Emin Pasha's Fort at Dufile
- Drive to Mt. Otzi for hiking or cultural tourism
- Moki Springs
- Overnight at Dufile – camping or on board

Day 5
Nimule

- Trip to the border to view the Folla Falls
- Along this area view elephants, buffaloes, possible stop in Lomunga Wildlife Area
- Return cruise to Pakwach

Road Trips

West Nile

Days 1 & 2
Gulu & surroundings - History and Outdoors

- Gulu Museum at Kal Kwaro (Acholi cultural chief's homestead)
- Visit to Kilak hills and Guruguru Caves for hiking and cultural tourism
- Amuru hot springs
- Samuel Gordon's Fort at Patiko
- Scenic drive to Larubi escarpment
- Overnight stay in Gulu or camping at Fort Patiko

Days 3 & 4
Pakwach and surrounding historical sites

- Wanglei (Nyipir & Labongo separation point)
- Emin Pasha's Wadelai Fort/Station
- Homestead visits including Kal Pakwach (the cultural chief)
- Ajai Wildlife Reserve for game viewing, nature walks, birding and sport hunting
- Overnight stay in Pakwach and/or at Ajai Wildlife Reserve

Days 5 & 6
West Nile - History, Landscape, Culture

- Mt. Wati for hiking and cultural activities. Stop by the Belgian Monument at the foothills of Mt. Wati.
- Miradawa, Dubu, and/or Olewa Waterfalls
- Ambitambe Crater Lake
- Mt. Kei Forest Reserve for a forest walk and birding
- Overnight stays at Arua, Ajai, and/or Moyo

Days 7 & 8
Moyo - Outdoors, Wildlife, History

- Mt. Otzi Forest Reserve for hiking and nature walks
- Lomunga Wildlife Area (hippos, other wildlife)
- Moki Springs
- Emin Pasha's Dufile Fort
- Overnight stay (camping) at Dufile or Arra Fishing Lodge in Adjumani

Days 9 & 10
Arra and Adjumani - Outdoors

- Sport fishing, birding, canoeing, horse back riding
- Village or nature walks
- Boat ride to Icheri Island for birding and wildlife
- Zoka forest exploration, a chance to see endemic flying squirrel. Possibility to visit East Madi when the road opens.
- Hot springs in Pakele
- Drive to Gulu for the night
- Overnight stay at Arra Fishing Lodge and/or Adjumani

Eastern Acholi and Kidepo Valley

Days 1 & 2
Kitgum, Agoro Agu - Outdoors, Nature

- Drive to Kitgum through Patiko via Palabek/Ogili. Stop by to explore Samuel Baker's Fort at Patiko and Tim Padwat wildlife area (scenery)
- Agoro Agu Forest Reserve - nature walks, hiking, cultural tourism
- Overnight in Kitgum or camping near Agoro Agu

Days 3, 4, 5, & 6
Kidepo Valley and surroundings - Wildlife, Culture

- Wildlife viewing - game drives, game walks
- Lokajong caves in Karenga
- Hiking on Morungole and Labwor Mountains combined with cultural visits to Ik people
- Kanangorok hot springs
- Overnight stay at Kidepo Valley National Park and camping on Mt. Morungole

Days 7 & 8
Kidepo Valley and surroundings - Wildlife, Culture

- Travel journey back via Kitgum and Gulu
- Stopover in Pader to see Aruu falls
- Stopover in Paimol to visit Wii Polo Martyrs Shrine
- Overnight in Kitgum and Gulu

Information Sheets

Wildlife

Ajai Wildlife Reserve

Location:

Arua District. 45 km from Arua Town. It takes approximately 6.5 hours to reach Ajai Wildlife Reserve by road from Kampala. Alternatively, one can fly to Arua Airport. While in the park, one can get around on foot or in a safari vehicle..

Type of attraction:

Wildlife Reserve

Description:

Ajai is home to some large mammals and considerable birdlife. Named for the local chief, Ajai, who first declared it a sanctuary in 1937, Ajai Wildlife Reserve covers 16,600 hectares of mostly rolling grassland on the west bank of the Albert Nile.

Ownership:

Government of Uganda through Uganda Wildlife Authority

Status/Condition:

Accommodation facilities exist. Uganda Wildlife Safaris has received a concession to establish a safari camp in the reserve, which construction is underway.

Contact:

Uganda Wildlife Authority, Headquarters, 0312 555 000; Conservation Area Manager, Tom Okello, 0772 550 294.

East Madi Wildlife Reserve

Location:

Adjumani District.

Type of attraction:

Wildlife Reserve.

Description:

Boasts flora and fauna similar to Murchison Falls National Park and recently awarded as a management concession to a private operator, who plans to develop the reserve also for limited tourism.

Ownership:

Government of Uganda through Uganda Wildlife Authority

Status/Condition:

No facilities for visitors exist yet.

Contact:

Uganda Wildlife Authority, Headquarters, 0312 555 000; Conservation Area Manager, Tom Okello, 0772 550 294; Senior Warden in Charge: Julius Obwana, 0772 673 421

Kidepo Valley National Park

Location:

Northern Kaabong District. Getting to Kidepo takes 1.5-2 days by road. Visitors can also opt for a charter flight from Entebbe or Kajjansi to the airstrip in Lomei. Once there, accommodation options range from the upscale Apoka Lodge, the mid-range Kidepo (Nga'moru) Wilderness Safari Camp and the budget Apoka Hostel UWA.

Type of attraction:

National Park

Description:

Spectacular park with a wide variety of animals and bird life, surrounded by mountain ranges of Morungole, Nyangea Napore, and Labwor.

Ownership:

Government of Uganda through Uganda Wildlife Authority

Status/Condition:

Accommodation facilities listed above are operational. Game drives, nature walks, hiking and community visits can be arranged through Uganda Wildlife Authority and/or one of the lodging operators.

Contact:

Uganda Wildlife Authority, Headquarters, 0312 555 000; Conservation Area Manager, Asa Kule, 0772 469 463.

Nga'moru Wilderness Camp (Afrimax Holdings), 0 754 500 555; Apoka Lodge (Wild Places Africa), 0414 251 182 / 0772 489 497

Lipan Controlled Hunting Area

Location:

Northern Kitgum District, adjacent to South Sudan border.

Type of attraction:

Wildlife Area

Description:

The area has traditionally been used by local people for hunting. Lipan also provides important connectivity between Kidepo Valley and Agoro-Agu landscapes. Some large mammal populations are present.

Ownership:

Community

Status/Condition:

No facilities for visitors in place

Contact:

Uganda Wildlife Authority, Headquarters, 0312 555 000; Conservation Area Manager, Asa Kule, 0772 469 463

Senior Warden in Charge, James Okware, 0774 318 289

Lomunga Wildlife Area

Location:

Moyo District

Type of Attraction:

Wildlife Area

Description:

Lomunga used to be home of the Northern White Rhino until it became extinct in the late 1970's, and the reserve was thereafter degazetted. Some wildlife populations present. Lomunga borders the Nile River which boasts a healthy population of hippos as well as ample birdlife..

Ownership:

Community

Status/Condition:

No facilities for visitors in place.

Contact:

Uganda Wildlife Authority, Headquarters, 0312 555 000; Conservation Area Manager, Tom Okello, 0772 550 294; Senior Warden in Charge: Julius Obwana, 0772 673 421

Moyo District Environment Officer, Maurice Edema, 0772 539 207

Tim Padwat Wildlife Area

Location:

Lamwo District in Palabek Ogili Sub County adjacent to South Sudan border.

Type of Attraction:

Wildlife Area

Description:

Used to be a traditional hunting area for the local people and is, amongst other mammals, inhabited by the endangered L'hoest's monkey.

Ownership:

Community

Status/Condition:

No facilities for visitors in place.

Contact:

Lamwo District Environment Officer, Komakech Charles, 0772 480 668

Springs and Waterfalls

Amuru Pii Hotsprings - Panyimur

Location:

Panyimur Sub County, in Nebbi District.

Type of attraction:

Natural hot springs

Description:

Hot springs that emerge at the foot of a small hill.

Ownership:

Community/Clan. One family owns the land on which hot springs are found.

Status/Condition:

Unattended with no proper access road to the hottest point.

Contact:

Kal Panyimur, Odongo Sylvester, 0782 919 163

Amuru Pii Hotsprings - Amuru Town

Location:

Amoyo-Koma parish in Amuru Sub County, Amuru District.

Type of attraction:

Natural hot springs

Ownership:

Community

Status/Condition:

Not well attended to, and no facilities for visitors in place.

Contact:

LC 1 Chairperson, Otwe Parish, c/o Oola Geoffrey 0783 240 125

Aruu Falls

Location:

Kal Awinya Parish found in Angagura Sub County, Pader District. Approximately 8 kms from the main road (10-15 min drive) at a junction called Angagura on the Gulu-Kitgum road after the Aswa bridge.

Type of attraction:

Waterfall

Description:

Magnificent waterfall at Aruu hills along the course of Agago River which joins Aswa River.

Ownership:

Community / Pailim clan

Status/Condition:

No signage and facilities for visitors

Contact:

Clan leader, Okumu Michael, 0772 574 817

Moki Springs

Location:

Itula Sub County in Moyo District

Type of attraction:

Natural spring

Description:

The spring flows with deposits along its entire bed making it appear orange in color.

Ownership:

Individual

Status/Condition:

No facilities for visitors exist.

Contact:

Mzee Bore Justine (Landlord) or Drici Sunday (Landlord's son), 0773 121 985.

Forest Reserves, Hills and Mountains

Agoro-Agu Central Forest Reserve

Location:

Lamwo District along the international border with South Sudan

Type of attraction:

Central Forest Reserve on a range of beautiful hills. Agoro Agu is adjacent to expansive Imatong Hills in South Sudan.

Description:

Agoro-Agu Central Forest Reserve harbors endemic species of the Eastern Afromontane hot spot, including a bamboo forest and bird species not represented elsewhere in Uganda. There is also potential to link the forest with the greater Kidepo Valley landscape via the establishment of the adjacent Lipan Corridor.

Ownership:

Uganda Government through the National Forestry Authority

Status/Condition:

Under protection with minimal encroachment

Contact:

National Forestry Authority, Headquarters, 0312 264 035

National Forestry Authority, Sector Manager, Harriet Atim 0772 378 290

Era Forest Reserve

Location:

Moyo and Itula sub-counties, in Moyo District

Type of attraction:

Central Forest Reserve

Description:

Near Mt.Otzi, it covers 74 square kilomenters and is situated on the plateau above the Albert Nile

Ownership:

Uganda Government through National Forestry Authority

Status/Condition:

No facilities for visitors in place

Contact:

National Forestry Authority, Headquarters, 0312 264 035

National Forestry Authority, Sector Manager, Amadra Sabino 0782 861 699

Guruguru Caves

Location:

Guruguru village, Lamogi Sub County in Amuru District

Type of attraction:

Historical site on a rock with caves.

Description:

The caves are significant to the Lamogi people since they provided them refuge while resisting British colonial administration during the Lamogi Rebellion.

Ownership:

Community/Clan

Status/Condition:

Not well attended to and no facilities for visitors

Contact:

LC1 Chairperson, Oryem Santo, 0779 706 921

Landlord, Mzee Kenery Lakane, c/o LC 1 Chairperson

Mt. Otzi

Location:

Metu and Dufile Sub County, Moyo District along the international border and adjacent Nimule National Park in South Sudan

Type of attraction:

Central Forest Reserve with impressive biodiversity on a range of hills

Description:

Characterized by steep slopes and rugged terrain. Contains a variety of vegetation, from woodland, pockets of riverine forests, to savannahs. Home to a small isolated chimpanzee population.

Ownership:

Uganda Government through the National Forestry Authority

Status/Condition:

Under protection with minimal encroachment

Contact:

National Forestry Authority, Headquarters, 0312 264 035

National Forestry Authority, Sector Manager, Amadra Sabino 0782 861 699

Mt. Wati

Location:

Alivu Sub County in Maracha District

Type of Attraction:

Hills

Description:

Imposing hill with natural vegetation and some farming on the slopes. The top of the mountain is a grave for the Lugbara ancestor. The mountain is under clan caretaker who only guides if community is solving disputes or having rituals.

Ownership:

Community

Status/Condition:

No facilities for visitors in place

Contact:

Arua District Commercial Officer, Ogwang Cyprian, 0772 474 948

Zoka Forest

Location:

Adjumani District

Type of attraction:

Natural tropical forest with Zoka River flowing through it.

Description:

Zoka Forest represents the northernmost tropical high forest in Uganda, with the environment and species related to other similar forests in the Albertine Rift region to the South.

Ownership:

Uganda Government through National Forestry Authority & Uganda Wildlife Authority

Status/Condition:

No facilities for visitors with potential road from Adjumani side being constructed which allow visitors to access also E.Madi Wildlife Reserve.

Contact:

National Forestry Authority, Headquarters, 0312 264 035, National Forestry Authority, Sector Manager, Amadra Sabino 0782 861 698
Uganda Wildlife Authority, Headquarters, 0312 555 000; Conservation Area Manager, Tom Okello, 0772 550 294; Senior Warden in Charge: Julius Obwana, 0772 673 421
Moyo District Environment Officer, Maurice Edema, 0772 539 207

Historical & Cultural

Dufile Fort

Access/Location:

Panjala landing site in Moyo District. Approximately 30-45 minutes drive from Laropi landing site but can also be accessed on water.

Type of attraction:

Historical site with an existing monument

Description:

Emin Pasha and Charles Gordon's Fort established with the intention to make it headquarters of the Eastern Equatoria Province (now approximately the area of South Sudan and northern Uganda).

Ownership:

Department of Museum and Monuments, Community

Status/Condition:

No existing structures or facilities for tourists currently in place. Some excavation work undertaken several years ago. There is not much remaining except for the embankments created around the perimeter of the fort, some rubble piles from old buildings, and a few graves that can be visited. There is a good boat landing at this site, which is critical for the boat-based tours. At this time the guiding is done impromptu by local residents. For those traveling by road, Dufile is more accessible than Wadelai, particularly for those already crossing the river to visit Mt. Otzi.

Contact:

District Environment Officer Moyo, Maurice Edema, 0772 539 207

Samuel Baker's Fort at Patiko

Location:

Patiko Sub County in Gulu District. Approximately 35 kilometers from Pakwach town but can also be accessed on water

Type of attraction:

Historical site with remnants of structure built including a plaque on one of the chambers

Description:

Founded by Sir Samuel Baker in 1872 and later occupied by Emin Pasha and Charles Gordon

Ownership:

Department of Museum and Monuments, Community

Status/Condition:

Dilapidated with no facilities for visitors

Contact:

Community Development Office, Gulu, Goretti Okech, 0782-225608

Department of Museum and Monuments, Nelson Abiti, 0712 672 091

Wadelai Station

Location:

Along the western banks of the Albert Nile in Wadelai Sub County in Nebbi District. Approximately 35 kilometers from Pakwach town but also can be accessed by water.

Type of attraction:

Historical site with an existing monument

Description:

Established by Emin Pasha, Governor of Equatoria as his provincial headquarters in 1879.

Ownership:

Department of Tourism and Antiquities, Community

Status/Condition:

Dilapidated with no structures or facilities for visitors currently in place.

Contact:

District Environment Officer Nebbi, Doreen Fualing, 0782 878 098

District Commercial Officer Nebbi, Muswa David , 0772 861 597

Wang Lei

Location:

On the western banks of the Albert Nile immediately after crossing the bridge in Pakwach Town Council, Nebbi District.

Type of attraction:

Historical / Cultural Site

Description:

The point at which brothers Nyipir and Labongo separated. Nyipir and Tiful remained on the western banks of the Nile while Nyabongo crossed to the eastern banks..

Ownership:

Community and in particular Alur Kingdom

Status/Condition:

No signage or facilities for visitors

Contact:

Kal Atyak, in-charge for cultural sites, Rwoth Edward Opar, 0775 900 012

Wang Lei (Nyipir/Labongo split site), Jalabo Walter Omoli, 0783 795 667

Acknowledgements

The study team acknowledges with sincere gratitude the support accorded to them by staff of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), the President of Uganda Tourism Association (UTA), leadership and technical staff of the District Local Governments in the study areas, Cultural Leaders, Government Departments, and individuals consulted as part of this study. In particular, we thank in a special way Jan F. Broekhuis – Director WCS, and Juraj Ujhazy – Program Manager WILD for their commitment and support to this study.

This publication was enriched with additional collections of great pictures from the following persons and organizations:

- Abbie Trayler-Smith (page 20)
- Academic Dictionaries and Encyclopedias (page 39)
- Anna Batcheller (page 26)
- Charles Abola (pages 3, 9 - top, 10, 13, 18, 25, 29 - right, 30, 31, 32, 33, 36, 46, 48 - background, 49-53, 56, 57, 58-top, 59-60, 62 - top, 63-65)
- Delphi Booksellers (page 47 - right)
- Enterprise Uganda (page 23)
- Gallo/Getty Images (page 48 inserts)
- GB Image (page 17)
- Jan F. Broekhuis (pages: 9 - bottom, 35 - right, 37, 40, 41 - bottom, 44, 45)
- Joel Musaasizi (pages: front cover - overlay, 22)
- Judith Kaine (page 24)
- Juraj Ujhazy (pages: front cover - background 4, 6, 8, 12, 14, 15, 16, 27 - bottom, 28, 34, 38, 41 - top, 42, 43, 54, 61, 62 - bottom, 68)
- Khristopher Carlson (page 29 - left)
- Lourissa Yamaguchi (page 27)
- Mark Jordahl (pages: 19, 35 - left, 58 - bottom)
- Nick Anderson (page 2)
- Soylent Communications/NNDB (page 47 - left)
- UGO Entertainment (page 21)

The pictures used in this document were obtained from a variety of sources. We have endeavoured to list correct and full picture sources. Please contact Juraj Ujhazy (jujhazy@wcs.org if you have any concerns pertaining to the use or copyright of any of the pictures.

The information about ethnic groups in the "Culture" section is derived from writings by Sarah Ndagire and Albi of Face Music and the book "Peoples and Cultures of Uganda" by Richard Nzita & Mbaga Niwampa.

Charles Abola
Jim Ayorekire

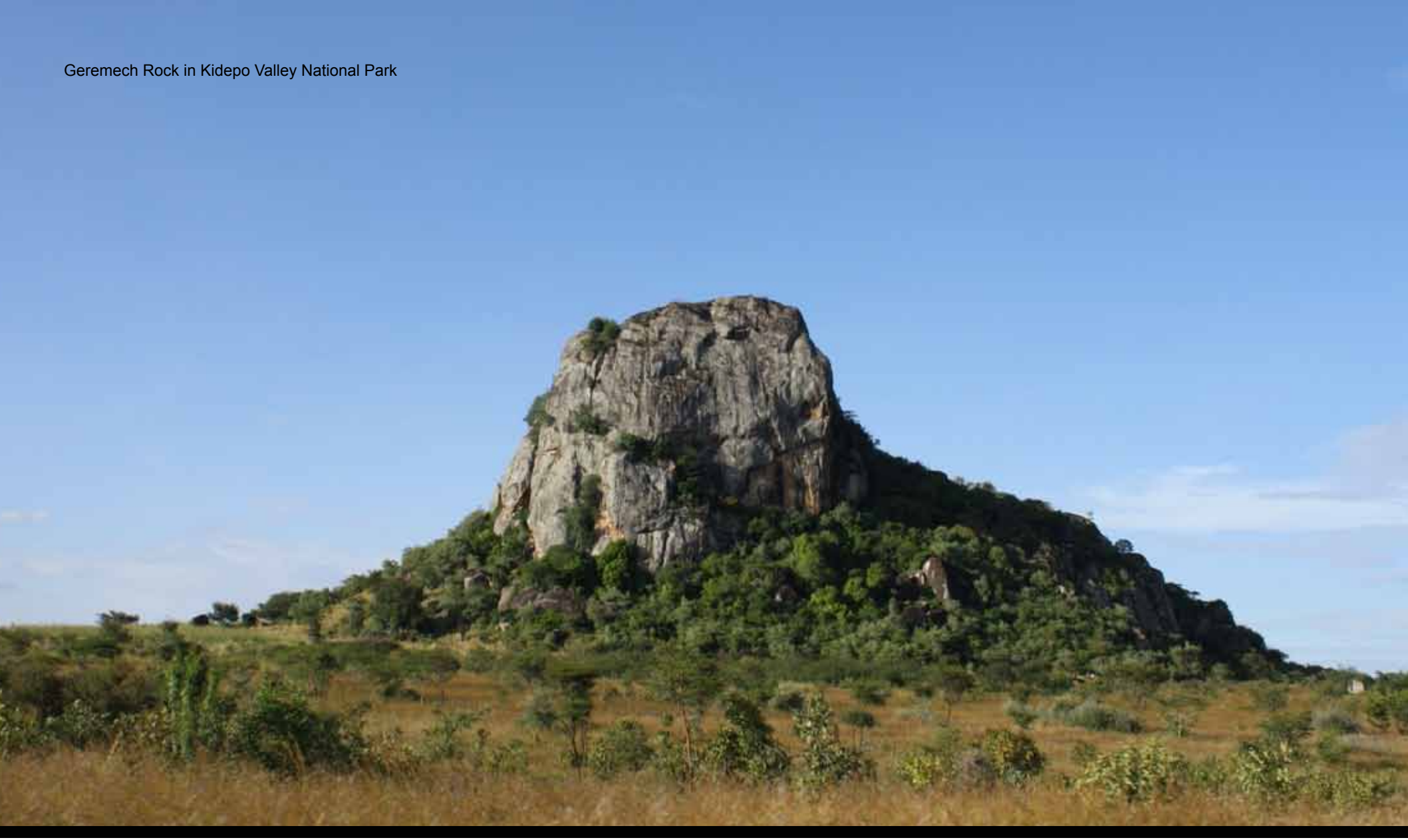
DVD Contents:

1. Northern Uganda Tourism Investment Opportunities - Documentary (12 min video)
2. Electronic version of this booklet.
3. Market Research report.

Enjoy and feel free to share with colleagues and friends of northern Uganda !

The booklet and DVD can be accessed also online at www.visituganda.com/destinations/northern

Geremech Rock in Kidepo Valley National Park



Uganda Tourism Association (UTA) in partnershipship with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) through its USAID-funded Wildlife Landscapes and Development for Conservation (WILD) program seeks to promote tourism in northern Uganda. This report is based on a study to identify potential tourism attractions and investment opportunities in the region.