

# Linking traditional values and conservation of threatened habitats and species

March 14 2014, by Pamela Wairagala

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A new video made by a team of Ugandan conservationists hopes to illustrate the link between traditional values and conservation of some of the world's threatened habitats and species

Fauna & Flora International's team in Uganda have created a short video to help raise awareness of the links between the cultural values of communities, and conservation of the areas in which they live.

Human activity including snaring, a general lack of awareness among the [local communities](#) about chimp conservation and shrinking habitats resulting in increased incidents of human-wildlife conflict are contributing to a decline in the population of the eastern chimpanzee in the Rwenzori Mountains.

According to a 2010 chimpanzee survey conducted by the Park Management, an estimated population of only 450-500 of the eastern chimpanzee *Pan troglodytes* is believed to still exist here.

The short video was shot in the Rwenzori Mountains National Park, home to the Banyarwenzuru, people of the snow, who believe that their gods reside in the snow capped mountains. Therefore, the mountains are considered sacred.

As part of Fauna & Flora International's Culture, Values and Conservation Programme, support from local communities has been enlisted, based on their cultural attachment to the Park and its resources.

Fred Kiiza, Senior Warden in Charge of the Rwenzori Mountains National Park, says that this approach is instrumental in reducing threats to the chimpanzees. "The Bathangi, a clan among the Banyarwenzuru people, consider themselves kinsmen to the chimpanzees, and have spearheaded an awareness campaign among the local community members to promote chimpanzee [conservation](#) based on their cultural beliefs and practices."

The Culture, Values and Conservation Programme has facilitated engagement between the management of National Park and the local people, who can now access their sacred sites inside the park.

Located in South Western Uganda, Rwenzori Mountains National Park is a World Heritage Site internationally known for among others being home to chimpanzees.

Human activity has however in the recent past, increasingly threatened the lives of the animals which are mainly hunted for their purported medicinal value, food and also in retaliation for raiding crop gardens.

Provided by Fauna & Flora International

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