



KIBALE EXPLORER

The Kasiisi Project & Kibale Forest Schools Program

Welcome to Kibale National Park!

Red colobus monkeys shout and chatter as they swing from tree to tree looking for fruit. *Thump, thump, thump!* Suddenly you spot a pair of black-and-white casqued hornbills fly overhead. Then, nearer to the ground, your eye catches an African giant swallowtail butterfly bouncing from plant to plant. This is happening at Kibale National Park, a 300-square mile lush oasis in western Uganda.



Where is Kibale?

Kibale National Park is at the foothills of the towering Rwenzori mountains in the African country of Uganda. Roughly the size of the U.S. state of Michigan, Uganda borders South Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The People of Kibale

Long before Kibale was designated a national park, the Batoro and Bakonjo people shared the forest with wild animals. Today, communities surrounding the park are made up of Batoro, Bakiga and other groups. Most families are subsistence farmers, growing crops such as bananas, beans, sweet potatoes and sugar cane.



Meet Some Kibale Animals

Kibale National Park is home to hundreds of different kinds of animals. Here are just a few and their unique characteristics:



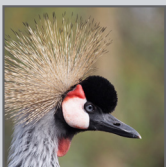
Dung beetles use their sensitive sense of smell to search for dung to consume. In doing so, they help with decomposition, seed dispersal and control of parasites.



The **papyrus gonolek** is a habitat specialist, restricted to papyrus swamps. It's becoming more rare due to habitat loss and water pollution.



Giant forest hogs, the largest species of pig, live in herds — called sounders — of up to 20 animals, usually females and their offspring, and only a single male.



The **grey-crowned crane** is the national bird of Uganda and is featured on the flag. It's one of only two crane species that can roost in trees by using a long hind toe to grasp branches.



Animals All Around

Established in 1993, the 795-km² park is mostly moist evergreen forest, but it supports other habitats as well, such as woodlands, grasslands and swamps. The park is home to over 60 mammal species, including 13 different types of primates. The park is perhaps best known for one particular primate, the chimpanzee, which is also one of our closest relatives. Kibale also has an incredible 375 varieties of birds, around 250 kinds of butterflies and 351 different trees. Some of these trees are over 200 years old and 180 feet tall. That's roughly the size of a 16-story building!

Engage

We've shared a bit about Uganda's Kibale National Park in Uganda, now it's your turn!

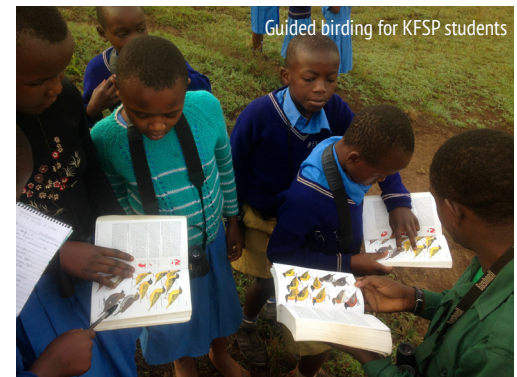
Research national parks near you. Pick your favorite and answer these questions:

1. When was this park designated?
2. What is significant about the park? What special features does it protect?
3. What types of habitats can be found in the park?
4. What are some of the park's important plant and animal species?

BONUS: Create a **visitor center display** to showcase what you've learned about this park. Combine drawings, photos and maps with text.

Habitat is Home

Habitat is what an animal calls home. It's where it finds all the basic things to live and grow: food, water, shelter and a place to raise its young. There are many different types of habitats, from lakes to deserts, and forests to swamps. Unfortunately habitat can change, making it unhealthy for animals. Water can become polluted. Non-native plants and animals can crowd out native ones. In Kibale, illegal cutting of trees for timber and poles fragments the forest, making habitats less healthy.



Explore

You don't have to travel to Uganda or some other faraway place to find habitat for wildlife. Parks, neighborhoods and even your yard are all habitats for animals and plants.

Create a Field Guide to Your Backyard

Take a walk around your yard, or if you don't have a yard, use your schoolyard or a park. Identify and write down any wildlife you see. Create a page for each species. Record the date and time, and any unique characteristics or behaviors. Finally add a sketch of the animal or a photo you've taken.

You can add trees or other plants to your field guide, as well as species you see beyond your own yard. You can even draw a map. Revisit it and update your guide often!

SHARE!

We'd love to see and highlight your display and field guide.
Email photos to KibaleExplorer@gmail.com.