

Project Update: October 2023

Update

I received the Rufford Small Grant to carry out the project to rediscover the endangered snails of the species *Gabbiella candida*, *Gabbiella walleri*, and *Bellamya rubicunda* in Lake Albert and *Ceratophallus apertus* in Lake Edward in Uganda. This project also aimed to conduct an awareness campaign to engage primary school children around Lake Albert in the protection and conservation of the species.

Project activities and their progress

Project activities	Current status
1. Survey of snails in Lakes Edward and Albert to rediscover the critically endangered snails and obtain information on the current diversity and distribution of snail species in the littoral zone and at various depths in the lakes.	Ongoing
2. Measurement of physicochemical water parameters and other selected environmental variables to assess their variation in relation to snail distribution.	Ongoing
3. Engage at least 500 primary school children at a selected Primary School near the Lake Albert and educate them about the role and importance of snails and the need to protect the lake and its biodiversity in general.	Done
4. Morphological identification	Ongoing
5. DNA based identification	Ongoing
6. Producing the final report	Pending
7. Peer reviewed Publication	Pending

Progress Activities



Left: Project team members sampling snails in the Semliki River, which flows into Lake Albert, to learn what the Semuliki River contributes to Lake Albert. © Julius Tumusiime. Right: Team members on their way to snail sampling at various depths in Lake Albert. © Francis Ssenkuba.



Local community collects Lake Albert shoreline snails for chicken feed in Butiaba region. © Marie Claire Dusabe.



© Marie Claire Dusabe.



Sorting out small snails from substrates before storing them in containers with 80% ethanol preservation. © Mikilos Balintu.

Awareness campaign

We visited Ntoroko Primary School, a school near Lake Albert in the Ntoroko region. The children were educated about the importance of the environment, with special focus on Lake Albert and its biodiversity, including snails. The team composed a song entitled "Mwitanzige inyanja yayitu." Mwitanzige is the former and local name of Lake Albert. And the whole statement means our Lake Albert. At the end of the campaign, the children were evaluated through a quiz where they were asked questions and given prizes. The children learned a lot, but also had a lot of fun singing our song together about protecting our lakes and protecting them from waterborne diseases.



Children of Ntoroko Primary School, their teachers and team members after a fun campaign. © Mikilos Balintu.



© Marie Claire Dusabe.



Members of the project team with teachers from Ntoroko Primary School and the principal after the campaign. © Mikilos Balintu.



Snail identification based on morphological features. © Marcellin Rwibutso.



DNA extraction of snails sampled in Lakes Albert and Edward. © Marcellin Rwibutso.