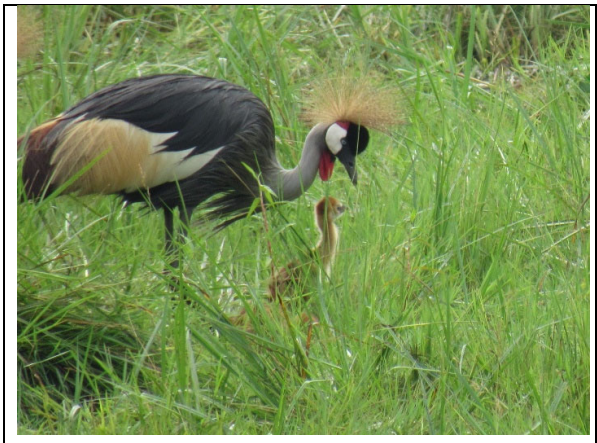
Project update report February 2026

CONSERVING THE ENDANGERED GREY CROWNED CRANES IN LWENGO DISTRICT: PROTECTING BREEDING SITES AND PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE




Prepared by

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Principal Investigator

Activity 1: Purchase of field equipment (November 2025-January 2026)

The team purchased the essential field equipment to use while implementing the project. These included a digital camera Garmin GPS and binoculars for field collection.

Figure 1: Project equipment

Activity 2: Inception meeting with the district local government authority (December 2025).

On December 16th, the project team engaged the district local government authority where we introduced the project, its objectives, methodology and the major activities involved. It was also aimed at lobbying for project support and also to get the necessary support and permission to proceed with the project and work with the lower local communities. The district local government officials included the following,

I. The Principal Assistant Chief Administrative Officer – Mr. Ssendagala John
II. The District Community Development Officer – Mr. Mazinga Joseph
III. The District Natural Resources Officer – Mr. Mutemba Godfrey
IV. The Senior agriculture Officer – Mr. Kaweesa Henry
V. The district entomologist – Ms. Owamani Olivia
VI. The District Planner – Mr. Ssentuwa John
VII. District Forest Ranger – Mr. Ssonzi Abdallah

Figure 2: PI presenting to the district technical personnel on 16th December 2025 at Lwengo District Headquarters

The district local government authorities provided guidance on the establishment of a formal partnership for the smooth running of the project via a Memorandum of Understanding. The District Natural Resources Officer appreciated the relevance of the project towards protection of the grey crowned crane. The district committee suggested that we operate within the sub counties of Lwengo, Kisseka and Kkingo which did not have any organization working on cranes at the time.

Outcomes

The team successfully established a MOU with the district for the implementation of the crane conservation project. The team was also able to confirm the three operational subcounty areas where the study sites would be identified. Upon successful introduction of the project and its objectives, the team was able to obtain support and authorization from the district authorities to engage the lower communities. The meeting enhanced district-level ownership of crane conservation and positioned the project within the district's natural resource management framework.

Activity 3: Mapping of key study sites (January 2026)

Following the inception meeting in December 2025, the team focused on mapping of the wetlands and key crane breeding areas within the study sites within the 3 sub counties using

satellite imagery and analyzed using Arc GIS pro software to delineate potential crane breeding habitats.

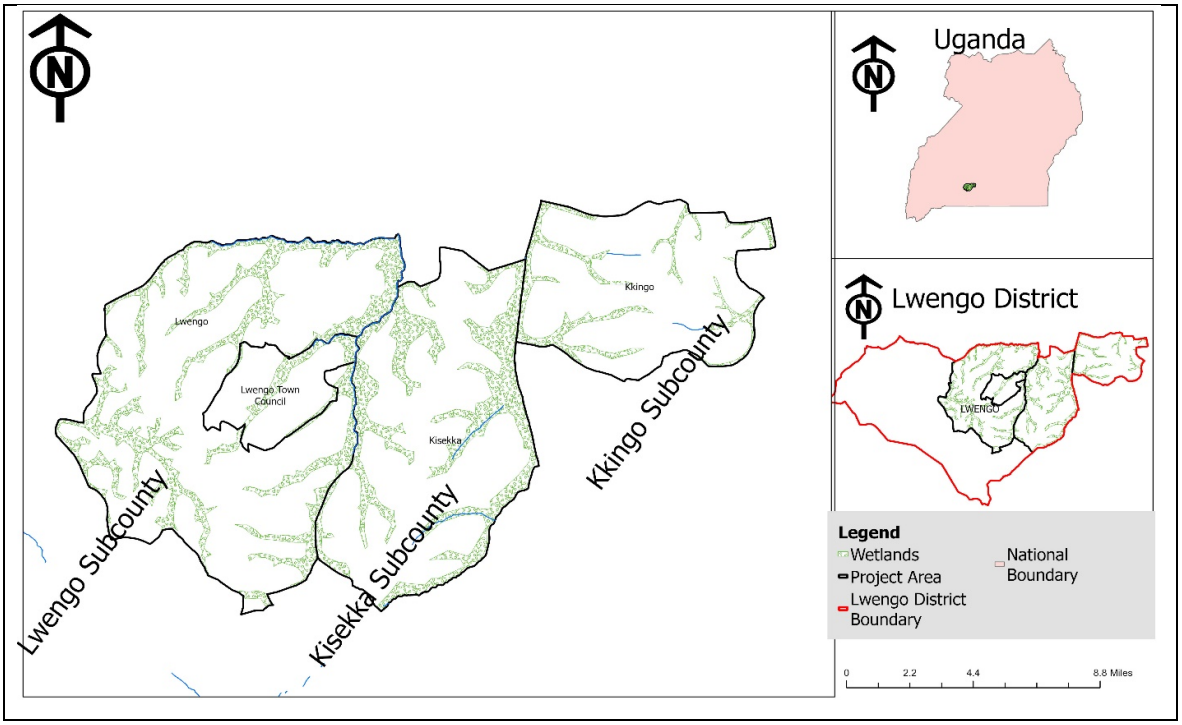

Figure 3: Study area map showing wetland systems

After spatial analysis, we conducted a ground truthing survey to obtain the true current outline of these areas and wetlands. This activity was also important in identifying the major local communities for the project collaboration. A major consideration was given to areas that had high populations of the crested crane and adjacency to agricultural fields. These are the areas where data collection and monitoring programs will be conducted throughout the project.

Figure 4: Conducting field survey for crane breeding sites in Lubumba wet grasslands /Marshes

Outcome

A total of 14 wetland patches were mapped, of which 6 were confirmed as active breeding sites after ground-truthing. Indicators included reported/observed presence of crane eggs, crane

chicks, juvenile cranes and known congregation of more than 10 pairs of the grey crowned cranes within wetlands and wet grasslands/farmlands. The confirmed sites were located within Kakinga and Kyoja wetland systems. These sites were chosen due to presence of breeding pairs, proximity of the breeding sites to agricultural areas and the opportunity to conserve the site.

Figure 5: Documented breeding activity of the Grey Crowned Crane in Lwengo District.
(A) Adult with newly hatched chick in Kyoja Wetland, Kyoko Village.
(B) Independent crane chick recorded during ground-truthing surveys in Kyoja Wetland.
(C) Breeding pair with chick in Lubumba wet grassland adjacent to the Kakinga Wetland System.

Next Phase Activities (March – May 2026)

The next phase will focus on community-level engagement and socio-economic assessment:

- Conduct household surveys around identified breeding sites
- Assess farmer–crane interactions, crop losses, and perceptions
- Analyze economically viable non-palatable alternative crops
- Organize stakeholder feedback meetings
- Conduct community sensitization through village meetings and radio programs