



Zulia Conservancy
UGANDA

AN INVITATION TO RANCHING AND RESTOCKING PARTNERS · 2027

Breeding back the Kidepo

Four breeding ranches on Zulia Central Forest Reserve to bring roan, oryx, gazelle, eland and hartebeest back to Kidepo and north-east Uganda, and the partners we are looking for to build and run them.

Species with nowhere to come from

Uganda restocks its parks well when a source herd exists: kob, giraffe, zebra and rhino have all been moved to Kidepo and Ajai in the last decade. For the dry-country species of the north-east there is no source herd. Roan is down to about 70 in one reserve. Beisa oryx is gone. Bright's gazelle, kudu and eland survive in tens or low hundreds.

Zulia Conservancy holds a 50-year licence from the National Forestry Authority over Zulia Central Forest Reserve, next to Kidepo Valley National Park, and the licence provides for game ranching under Uganda Wildlife Authority licensing. We plan four breeding ranches on its gentle, watered western side. They will grow source herds of East African subspecies to IUCN standards and release the surplus, year after year, to Kidepo and other parks.

SPECIES	STATUS IN UGANDA
Roan antelope	Extinct in Kidepo and Lake Mburo; Critically Endangered in Uganda, about 70 left, all in Pian Upe
Beisa oryx	Gone from north-east Uganda; recorded as "extinct?" in the national range
Bright's gazelle	Near-extirpated in Kidepo; 756 nationally, mostly in Pian Upe
Greater · lesser kudu	About 206 and 806 in the whole country; lesser kudu found only in the Kidepo system
Eland	127 in Kidepo Valley NP and 35 in Karenga Community Wildlife Area
Jackson's (Lelwel) hartebeest	Present but scarce in Kidepo; 37 counted across the border in 2022
Rhino	Extinct in Kidepo from 1983 until four white rhino arrived in March 2026

4 ranches

a breeding hub, a roan complex, a plains ranch and a community ranch

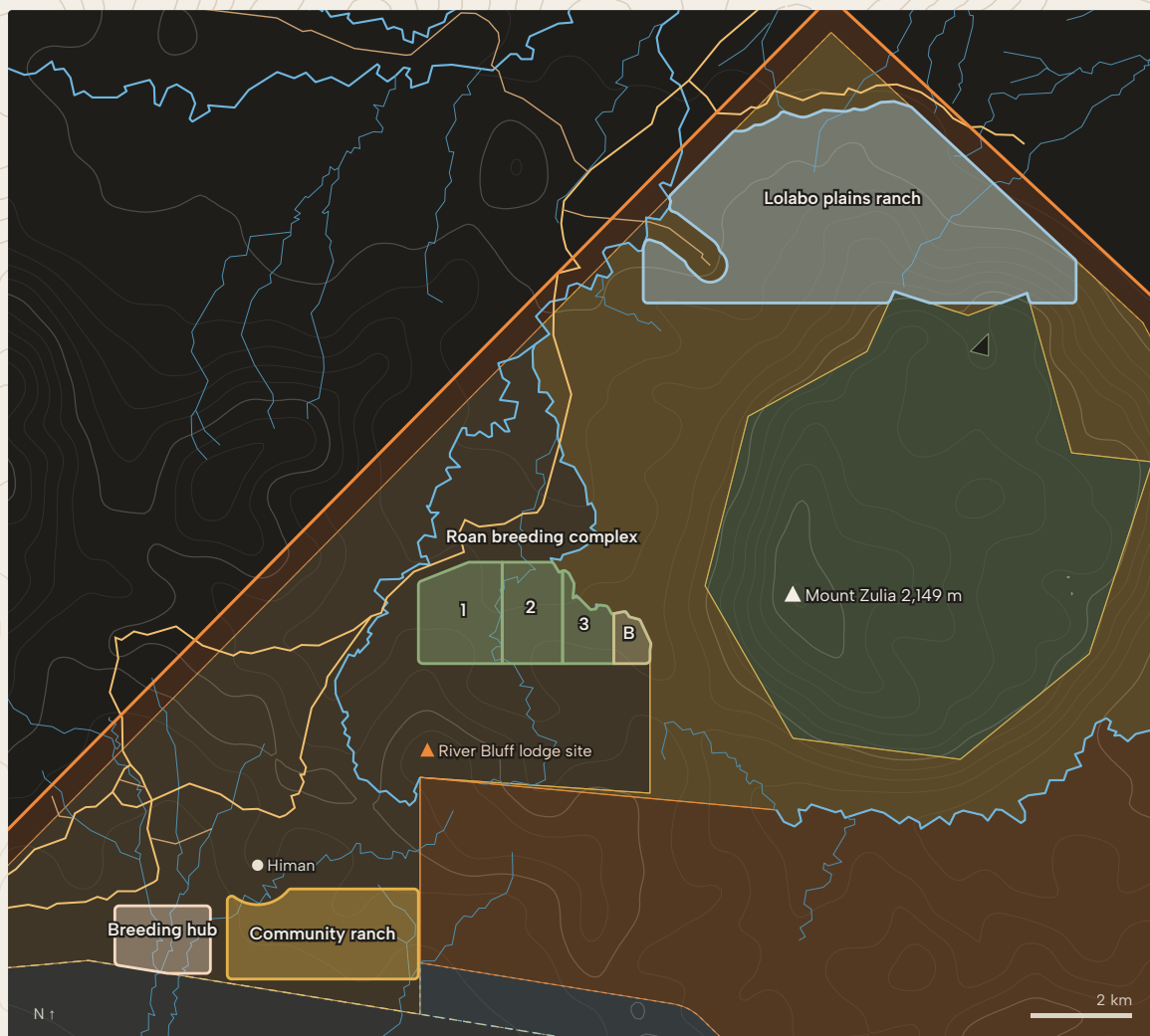
5 species

to start, from about 125 founders

≈332 animals

for release in the first ten years, on the base case

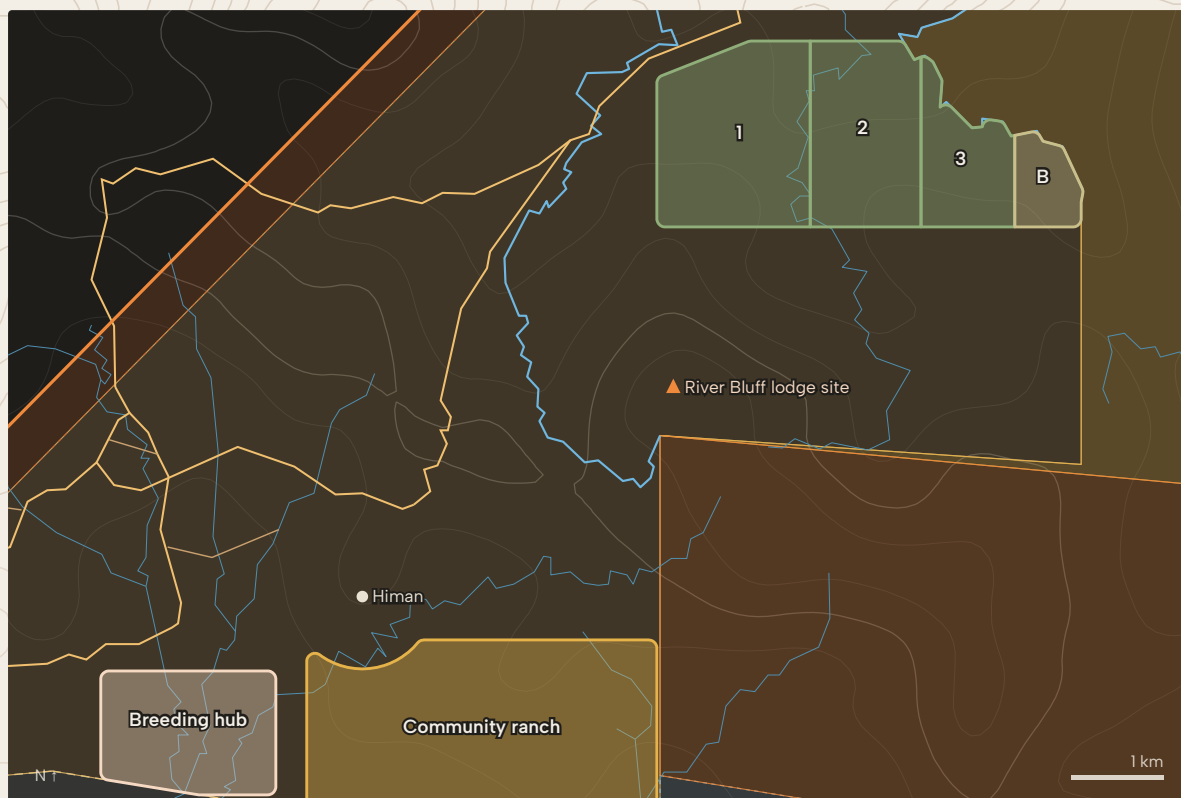
Four ranches on the Himan side



RANCH	AREA	WHAT IT IS	SPECIES	GROUND
Breeding hub	2.4 km ²	Receiving bomas, quarantine pens, vet station, fodder plots, staff housing	All species on arrival	1,250 m · 0.2 km to road
Roan complex	7.3 km ² in 4 camps	Three predator-proof breeding camps and a bachelor camp, one herd bull per camp	Roan	1,210–1,260 m · water in each camp
Lolabo plains ranch	24 km ²	Extensive game-fenced camp on the northern lowland, south of the Natinga track	Eland, Beisa oryx, Lelwel hartebeest	1,040 m · 0.3 km to track
Community ranch	6.4 km ²	Co-owned with the neighbouring community; open short-grass ground east of Himan	Bright's gazelle, ostrich unit	1,330 m · next to Himan

Areas of search, drawn from elevation, water and road data. Final lines follow a ground survey, consultation with the neighbouring community and an environmental assessment. No ranch is in the part of the reserve shared with the national park.

How each ranch works

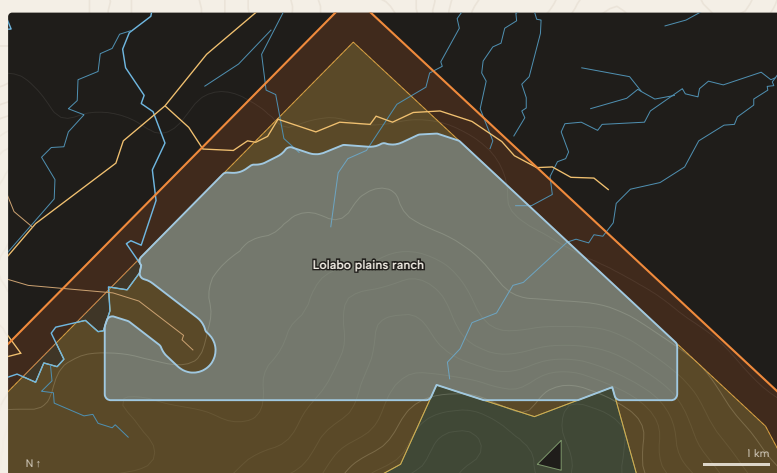


Breeding hub. Receiving bomas, quarantine pens, a vet station, irrigated fodder and staff housing on flat ground beside the Himan road. Every founder arrives here first. Visitors from the reserve's lodges can see the programme at work.

Roan complex. Three predator-proof breeding camps and a bachelor camp on the watered valley floor north of the River Bluff, following the design of Kenya's Ruma roan sanctuary: one herd bull per camp, rotated every two years, with dipping, anthrax vaccination and controlled burning built in.

Lolabo plains ranch. A large game-fenced camp on the open lowland north of Mount Zulia for eland, Beisa oryx and Lelwel hartebeest: grazers and browsers that grow fast and, in the oryx's case, barely need to drink.

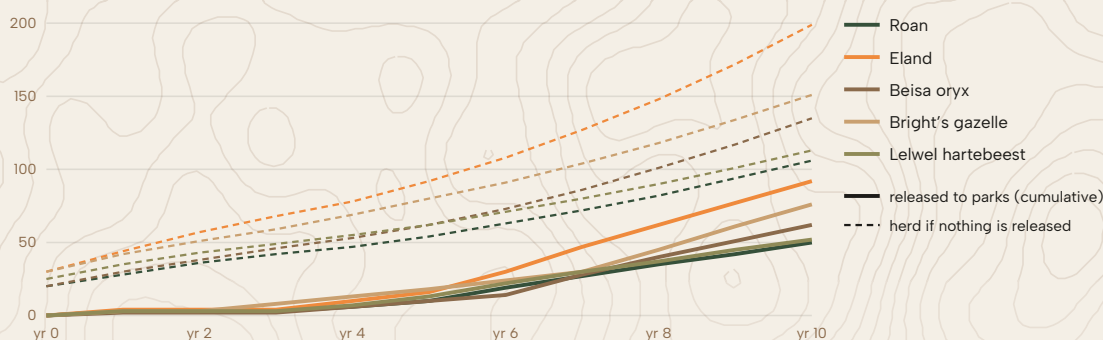
Community ranch. Short-grass ground east of Himan, co-owned with the neighbouring community, for Bright's gazelle and a small ostrich rearing unit. Jobs, scouts and a share of the income go to Himan.



The Lolabo plains ranch, on the open lowland north of Mount Zulia.

Five species to start, and how fast they grow

SPECIES	TAXON	FOUNDERS	RANCH	GROWTH	HERD YR 5 / 10 IF NONE RELEASED	RELEASED BY YR 10
Roan	<i>H. e. langheldi</i>	5 ♂ · 15 ♀	Roan complex	≈18%	54 / 106	50
Eland	Common eland	8 ♂ · 22 ♀	Lolabo plains	≈21%	92 / 199	92
Beisa oryx	<i>O. beisa</i>	5 ♂ · 15 ♀	Lolabo plains	≈21%	62 / 135	62
Bright's gazelle	<i>N. g. brighti</i>	6 ♂ · 24 ♀	Community ranch	≈17%	80 / 151	76
Lelwel hartebeest	<i>A. b. lelwel</i>	6 ♂ · 19 ♀	Lolabo plains	≈16%	62 / 113	52



Base-case projections from an age-structured model, with breeding herds held at each camp's carrying capacity and the surplus released every year. Calf survival is the variable that matters most, so the plan puts most of its effort there.

Later, or not at all

SPECIES	APPROACH
Nubian giraffe	Range expansion, not a camp. Groups of 10–15 released into the Lotukei plateau with the Giraffe Conservation Foundation and UWA, as at Kidepo (2018), Pian Upe (2019) and Ajai (2026). Growth 5–8% a year.
Ostrich	A small egg-and-chick rearing unit at the community ranch. Kidepo holds Uganda's only wild ostrich. Chick survival is the risk: 55% in the first year in Chad, and none in the rainy season.
Greater and lesser kudu	Phase 2, once a source is agreed. Nationally too few to take founders from Uganda, and both are prone to capture myopathy.
Black rhino	Long term, at most. Zulia's 400–800 mm rainfall suits black rhino, but white rhino are already being built up in the NRT/UCF sanctuary in Kidepo. Zulia should support that, not compete with it.
Not here	Cheetah (needs over 200 km ² for ten animals, and eats founders); buffalo, kob and zebra (plentiful elsewhere, and south-western buffalo would bring corridor disease).

The standard every camp works to

The right animals. Ugandan or East African subspecies only: East African roan (*langheldi*), not the southern roan of the South African market; Beisa oryx, not gemsbok; Lelwel hartebeest, not red hartebeest; Nubian giraffe. Founders from tick-exposed African stock, never zoo-born, because naïve roan calves die of theileriosis. Genetic records kept from day one.

The IUCN guidelines. Every species follows the IUCN Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations (2013). That means removing the cause of decline (poaching and grazing), a feasibility and disease risk assessment, a monitoring and exit plan, community engagement and full permits. Stock bred to that standard is stock UWA and donors will accept.

Disease. Annual anthrax vaccination (Kruger lost 45 roan in one breeding camp in 2012 after stopping it), automatic acaricide at feed troughs (it took sable calf losses in South Africa from 30% to near zero), buparvaquone on hand for theileriosis, and long-acting tranquillisers at capture against myopathy (losses from over 20% to under 2%). No buffalo moved in from the south-west.

Water and feed. At least two covered troughs on boreholes in every camp. No open water outside the camps near the roan: in Kruger, new waterpoints drew in zebra and lions and helped push roan out. Dry-season protein lick and lucerne at 0.5–1.5 kg a head a day.

People. Constant presence rather than area ratios: 8–12 rangers covering the hub and roan complex around the clock, 2 husbandry staff per camp, a resident vet technician with a specialist wildlife vet on call, and community scouts on the community ranch.

Releases. Surplus males leave first. Breeding groups follow once each camp reaches its cap. Every move uses UWA's veterinary team, a soft-release boma at the receiving site and post-release monitoring. These are the KWS translocation rules that Uganda's own moves already follow.

Lessons we are building in

CASE	LESSON
Kruger roan, South Africa	Over 60 roan died in breeding enclosures after anthrax vaccination stopped and water and fire were neglected
Ruma roan, Kenya	Calf predation by hyena and leopard was the main loss once poaching was controlled; Kenya still had only 21 roan in 2025
Mlilwane, Eswatini	Zoo-born roan calves died of theileriosis; survival improved with local bulls
Ol Pejeta, Kenya	Leopards breached a "predator-proof" camp by jumping and through warthog holes
Ziwa, Uganda	A breeding success (6 to 48 rhino) that UWA closed in 2021 over a dispute between NGO and landowner: write ownership and exit terms first

Five ways to take part

MODEL

HOW IT WORKS

Ranch operator	An investor or conservancy operator takes a long sub-lease of a ranch, funds the fence, water and staff to Zulia's standard, and holds its own UWA ranching right. A share of the progeny goes to restocking; the rest it may keep or sell with permits.
Sanctuary partner	A conservation NGO runs a ranch, typically the roan complex, as a managed sanctuary, bringing expertise and funding. Zulia provides the ground, the hub and security.
Community partner	The neighbouring community's conservancy or wildlife association co-owns the community ranch, with technical support. It holds the jobs, the scouts and a defined share of the income.
Species sponsor	A zoo, foundation or company funds one species or one camp, in return for naming, data, staff exchange and a long-term story.
Restocking partner	A park manager or reserve receives surplus animals under an offtake agreement that covers capture, transport and a cost-recovery fee.

What Zulia provides

The ground, under a 50-year licence; road access and the breeding hub's quarantine and veterinary services at cost; landscape security and patrols; support with the UWA use right, NFA consent and veterinary permits; and the link to the parks that need the animals.

The principles every agreement follows

PRINCIPLE

WHAT IT MEANS

Long tenure	15–25 year sub-leases within Zulia's 50-year licence, so partners can invest
Clear ownership	Who owns the founders and the offspring is written down before the first animal arrives
One standard	IUCN translocation guidelines, a shared veterinary protocol, shared genetic and herd records, and an annual audit
Restocking first	An agreed share of every species' surplus is offered first to Uganda's parks
Step-in and exit	Zulia and UWA can step in if welfare, security or permits fail; animals leave Zulia only with their approval

NEXT STEPS

How to get involved

Permissions. Each ranch needs a ranching or farming right from the Uganda Wildlife Authority under the Uganda Wildlife Act 2019, consent from the National Forestry Authority and an environmental assessment for its fence, and veterinary and, for imports, CITES permits for every move. Zulia leads these applications with its partners.

The right animals. Only East African subspecies, from tick-exposed African stock, under a disease and feasibility assessment that UWA's veterinary team signs off.

WHEN	WHAT
Now – mid 2027	Expressions of interest from prospective ranch operators, sanctuary partners, sponsors and restocking partners
Early 2027	Aerial count and habitat survey of the ranch sites
2027	Permissions, community agreement, founder sourcing; partners selected
2028	Breeding hub and roan complex built; first roan in quarantine
2028–30	Plains ranch and community ranch; first surplus releases



Eland, one of the first species for the Lolabo plains ranch. Zulia Conservancy photograph.

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

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This document describes a programme in preparation. Sites, species, numbers and terms are indicative and depend on surveys, partners and the requirements of UWA and NFA. It is not an offer.