

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, February 18, 2020

RE: WORLD WILDLIFE DAY AND LAUNCH OF ROAN ANTELOPE RECOVERY PLAN

All is set for this year's World Wildlife Day whose national celebrations in Kenya are to be held in Ruma National Park in Homa Bay County.

Tourism and Wildlife Cabinet Secretary, Hon Najib Balala, will preside over the celebration on March 3, 2020 under the global theme: "***Sustaining all life on Earth***" as developed by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES) Secretariat. CITES is an international agreement between governments. Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.

On the same day, Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), in collaboration with her partners, will launch Roan Antelope Recovery Plan. The recovery and action plan aims to re-establish a viable population of Roan Antelope in Ruma National Park and adjacent areas. The plan identifies threats facing the species and guides on interventions required to address them to ensure effective conservation and management of the species. This will be achieved through a set of objectives and activities that will help address security, population and habitat management, community Involvement, education and awareness, and coordination.

Globally, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) classifies Roan Antelope as a species of least concern. However, in Kenya, the species is highly threatened due to its low population of only 12 individuals endemic in Ruma National Park.

Historically, the roan antelope occupied fairly large areas of southern Kenya, areas around Mount Elgon and the Cherangani Hills, around Ithanga Hills (Kiambu County) and areas around Chyulu Hills. The historical population in Kenya was 200 animals in 1970. The decline of this population to the current numbers is attributed to a range of factors, including habitat loss due to land use changes, poaching, predation and diseases.

This year's World Wildlife Day theme encompasses all wild animal and plant species as a component of biodiversity as well as the livelihoods of people, especially those who live closest to nature. It also underlines the importance of sustainable use of natural resources in support of the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Today, there are 33 mammalian, 28 avian and 356 plant species in Kenya whose survival is threatened. These threats are driven by climate change, habitat loss and fragmentation, poaching, illegal wildlife trade and human-wildlife conflict associated with land-use changes. Section 49 of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act, 2013 provides for the development and implementation of species specific recovery plans for species listed in the sixth schedule, such as the Roan Antelope. That is why a key activity to mark this year's World Wildlife Day is to launch the roan antelope recovery and action plan that resonates with the theme of "***Sustaining all life on Earth***".