




WILDERNESS
SAFARIS

Bisate

All you need to know

the conservation



Conservation - The Mountain Gorilla



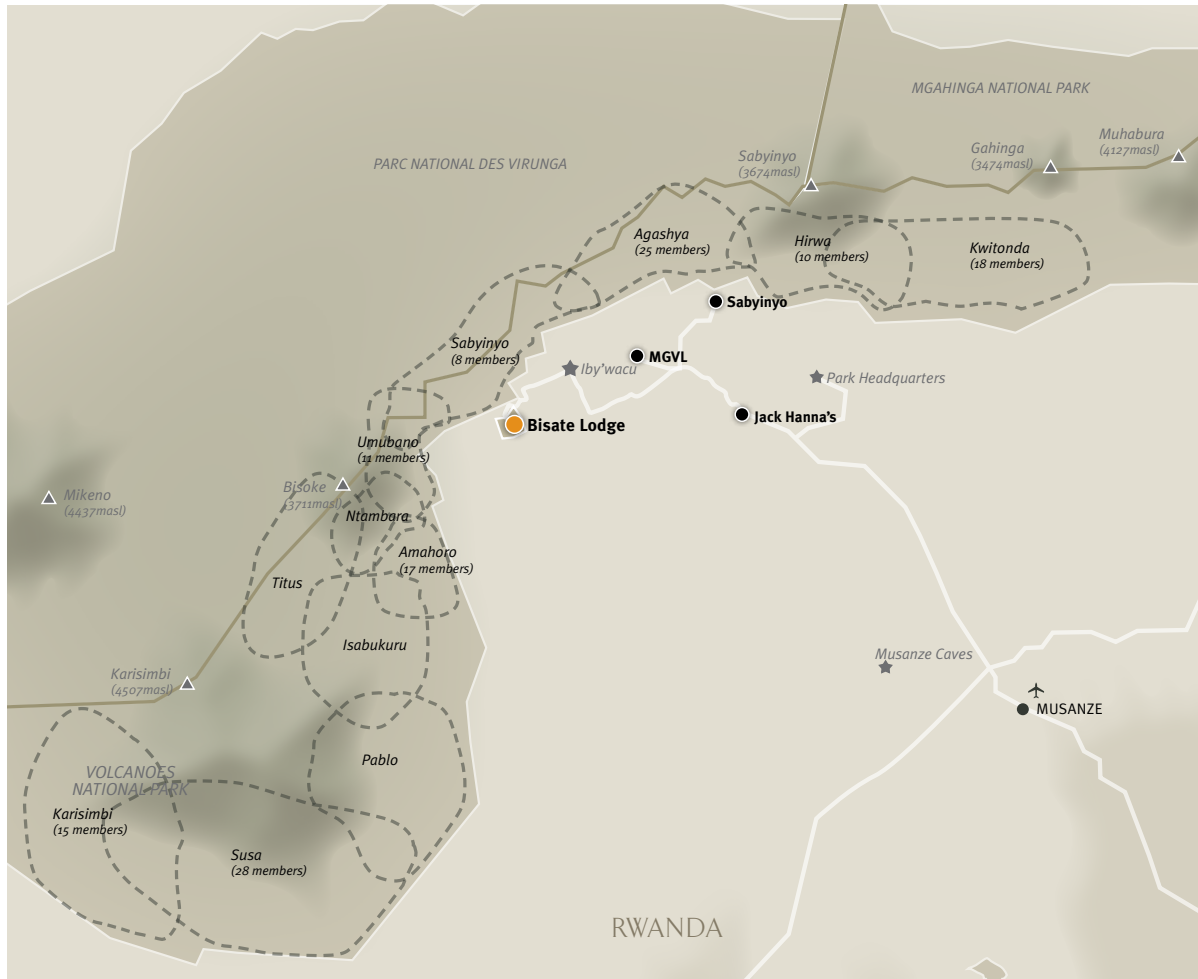
We plan for Bisate to become a Centre of Excellence for our guests to learn about great apes, including the Critically Endangered mountain gorilla *Gorilla beringei beringei*.

The mountain gorilla is the best known of all the great ape subspecies as a result of the work of Dian Fossey and others, but just 880 animals remain, isolated in the remaining natural islands of the Virunga Massif and Uganda's Bwindi Forest. Here, they exist in family groups overseen by massive silverbacks, roaming their home ranges in search of favoured vegetation.

We want Bisate guests to enjoy more than just a bucket list experience with these incredible creatures. We want to imbue them with a desire to conserve all great apes and their habitats.



Conservation - The Guest Experience



There are ten groups of habituated mountain gorillas in Volcanoes National Park with just eight visitors permitted to trek to each group every day. Each group has fascinating origins and family stories, and once you are allocated to a group for your morning's trek, your rangers delight in elaborating on the gorillas' individual histories.

The gorilla experience for our guests does not end at the park boundary. At the lodge itself discussions with, and presentations from, gorilla experts cover topics such as their genetics, their endangered status, their diet and behaviour, why they do not survive in captivity and much more.



Conservation – “More than a lodge”

The so-called “gorilla express” is merely the starting point. At Bisate, a whole new outlook awaits, as we learn more about primates, politics, ecotourism and ethics – and about our species and its place on this planet.

Bisate will be more than a lodge. Its vision of reforestation and rehabilitation means that each guest will contribute to biodiversity conservation and local community engagement. This will be a world-class example of sustainable conservation tourism making a dramatic, positive and far-reaching impact on the unique fauna and flora of a precious, increasingly rare, habitat.



Conservation – A light footprint

As with all Wilderness camps, we submitted to an external Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), and then conducted our own.

The back-of-house was built first so that all elements such as energy supply, wastewater disposal and recycling can begin here. The light footprint then began, in the construction phase, with the crew adhering to strict environmentally-sensitive building guidelines. A demarcated pathway has been laid down, built using local volcanic rock, along which the crew must move, so as to protect the trees, both those already there and the new saplings that we have planted.

The construction of Bisate has been undertaken to create a lodge that will run with an exceptionally light footprint – in terms of energy supply, water resources and recycling.





Conservation – Reforestation

It is not enough to build a camp. We must ensure that our model of sustainable conservation is rooted in the lodge's very existence. Given Rwanda's intense agricultural model, the country has a limited number of indigenous trees outside of the national parks, so our reforestation project is vital.

We believe our project will inspire further reforestation efforts throughout the country over time.

Conservation – The plan and the trees

The area around Bisate is set to follow the volcanoes' natural vegetation zones: a bamboo forest at the low-lying areas, along with other pioneer species that grow quickly such as forest dombeya and neoboutonia. Further up, species that are longer lived, such as hagenia and hypericum amongst others, will form a beautiful forest woodland. These trees will take longer to grow to maturity, but will eventually vegetate the main lodge area and the slopes of the Bisate Hills.

A eucalyptus woodlot has been planted (to ensure a sustainable firewood supply for those chilly evenings in the rooms), while some 12 hectares has been set aside for growing pyrethrum as a cash crop to help fund the conservation elements of the project.



Artist's impression: current site



Artist's impression: future reforestation

INDIGENOUS TREES PLANTED IN THE SECOND HALF OF 2016 (4 860)		INDIGENOUS TREES IN NURSERY READY FOR PLANTING (3 689)	
Bamboo	3 000	Hagenia	2 146
Dombeya	873	Dombeya	940
Hagenia	715	Neoboutonia	603
Lobelia	150		
Neoboutonia	122	TARGET FOR YEAR END	10 000



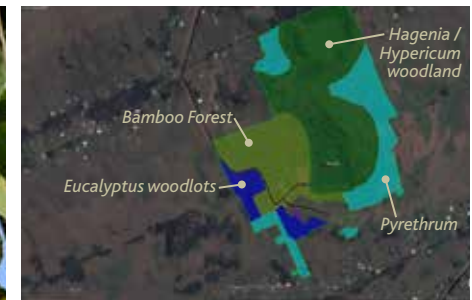
Bamboo



Hagenia



Neoboutonia



Reforestation plan

Conservation – Our guests are participants



Bisate's reforestation project employs five community members – including Jean-Moise Habimana (see Bisate – All you need to know – Community C) and aims to plant a further 5 000 plants from some 10 indigenous species over the next 18 months.

By the end of 2016 we anticipate having germinated and planted out 10 000 indigenous trees on the Bisate site and, once the lodge is open, will encourage our guests to spend time in the tree nursery and to plant a tree during their stay, thus contributing directly to the restoration of the area. In fact, in the development process every visitor to the site – including the construction crew – has actually already planted their own tree!

Conservation – Restoration of habitat and species



Issoria baumanni

Reforestation allows recovery and recolonisation by indigenous species that currently have very limited habitat, especially at the lower altitudes where agriculture has dominated for decades.

Through our habitat restoration project we are optimistic that as many as 12 bird species endemic to the Albertine Rift will move back into the area, amongst them:

- Rwenzori turaco
- Mountain black boubou
- Strange weaver
- Rwenzori batis
- Rwenzori double collared sunbird

120 species of butterflies occur in Volcanoes National park and we look forward to a number of these returning to Bisate too.



Rwenzori Turaco



Mountain Black Boubou



Strange Weaver



Rwenzori Batis

Conservation – Recolonisation of the site

Southern tree hyrax, side-striped jackal and at least one species of genet have already recolonised the site – in other words, they are residents of Bisate!

Golden monkey and buffalo have recently been recorded as ‘vagrants,’ i.e. animals that have been seen in the area but have not settled down as residents.

We expect these species to become part of the Bisate ecosystem:

- Carruthers’ mountain squirrel
- Boehm’s squirrel
- Bushbuck
- Black-fronted duiker
- Serval
- Gambian giant pouched rat
- Brush-tailed porcupine
- Slender mongoose



Golden monkey



Carruthers' mountain squirrel



Black-fronted duiker

Conservation – New arrivals

Staff members visiting the Bisate site just last week (22 November 2016) reported seeing a number of species who clearly are feeling at home, proving that our recolonisation dream can be realised...



Serval track



Black-headed waxbill



Side-striped jackal



Long-tailed admiral



Rwenzori bearded chameleon



Opening 1 June 2017

View from the lodge