

## **Ibirunga National Park (Volcanoes National Park)**

By HATEGEKIMANA

One day, I was at home talking with my friend about National Park issues because we were seeing gorillas and monkeys outside of the park. My friend Henriette and I visited the Ibirunga National Park, especially the Sabyinyo volcano next to the ORTPN\* center.

We went with an ORTPN agent to the forest. We saw various animals, such as monkeys, mountain gorillas, elephants, and impalas.

We saw the mountain gorillas dancing and beating on their chests as a sign of welcoming us. I was very impressed to see this. We tried to imitate them and they showed us that they were glad to receive us. We were also very happy to see that even gorillas have feelings similar to humans.

Every summer here at Kinigi, the government organizes a naming ceremony (*Kwita izina*) near the Kabwende school. This ceremony consists of giving names to the newborn gorillas. It is an international ceremony which makes the local

community conscious of protecting gorillas. Do you want to enjoy the wildlife where you can observe the volcano valleys and various animals and birds? Come to Kabwende Primary School and we will make you happy.

After visiting the National Park of Volcanoes, we went to Akagera National Park in eastern Rwanda and Nyungwe National Park where the landscape, animals, lakes, and climate impressed us all.

All of these good things are in this country of a thousand hills. Rwanda will make you happy and relaxed, especially during the holidays. Welcome to our country, Rwanda.

(\*Rwanda Office of Tourism and National Parks)