

nature net

The Nature Kenya Newsletter www.naturekenya.org November 2002

OUTINGS

Kinangop North
Saturday 2 November '02

Enjoy a relaxing day on the grasslands of the Kinangop Plateau and the gardens of a guest house with spectacular views. Book at the Kenya Museum Society office, with your Nature Kenya membership card and 300/- (children 200/-)

Meet at the National Museum, Nairobi car park to depart at 7:30 a.m.

Safaricom Race Day
Sunday 10 November '02

Visit the Nature Kenya stand!

GRASSROOTS

Monitoring the Health of the Environment - Local Communities in Kenya Taking the Lead

A novel approach to measure a healthy environment is being pioneered by local communities in Kenya, in partnership with Nature Kenya, BirdLife International, the Government of Kenya, the Darwin Initiative and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds of the UK. Local communities and Government staff will carry out this monitoring on the ground at 60 Important Bird Areas. The information they collect will be stored in a database at National Museums of Kenya, analysed and made widely available to help planners and decision-makers. The regular monitoring will alert government and non-government agencies to any important change in the health of our environment.

Researchers from the National Museums of Kenya and Nature Kenya

TALKS & VIDEOS

MZIMA: Haunt of the River Horse

Video premiere
Monday 9 December '02,

5:00 p.m. Louis Leakey HALL,
National Museums of Kenya, Nairobi

Thirty years after Alan and Joan Root's classic *Mzima: Portrait of a Spring*, Nature Kenya, in conjunction with the East African Wild Life Society, is proud to host the Premiere of this award-winning sequel.

The film reveals the intricate pyramid of life that a hippo school supports and the astonishing and sometimes shocking behaviour that is hidden beneath the calm surface of Mzima Springs. The team used a combination of scuba and specially designed remote cameras to get their lenses into the mouths of hippos and crocodiles to show revelatory and intimate behaviour - much of it new, even to science.



Husband and wife filmmakers Mark Deeble and Victoria Stone, assisted by Norbert Rottcher, spent over two years making this film, to which Alan Root is Executive Producer.

Mzima: Haunt of the River Horse was a collaborative project between the filmmakers and Kenya Wildlife Service. It has won over thirty international awards - including an Emmy.

Videos will be on sale, with all profits donated to wildlife conservation.



have identified 60 Important Bird Areas in Kenya. Many of these are the country's major national parks and forest reserves, such as Arabuko-Sokoke Forest in Coast Province, Nairobi National Park in Nairobi, and Lake

Bogaria National Reserve in Rift Valley. Others are unprotected sites such as the grasslands of the central and western highlands, and the swamps fringing Lake Victoria. These sites are crucial for the survival of endangered birds and other living things, according to international criteria.

Two workshops to train local communities and Government staff to monitor the health of the environment in the 60 Important Bird Areas will be held at the Kenya Wildlife Service Training Institute in Naivasha in November.

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PERFORMANCE

Nairobi Music Society, NMS Choir, Cantabile, The Choir of Precious Blood School and Nairobi Orchestra, Conducted by Tony Davies, perform Faure's Requiem, Andrew Carter's Benedicite and Stravinsky's Rite of Spring

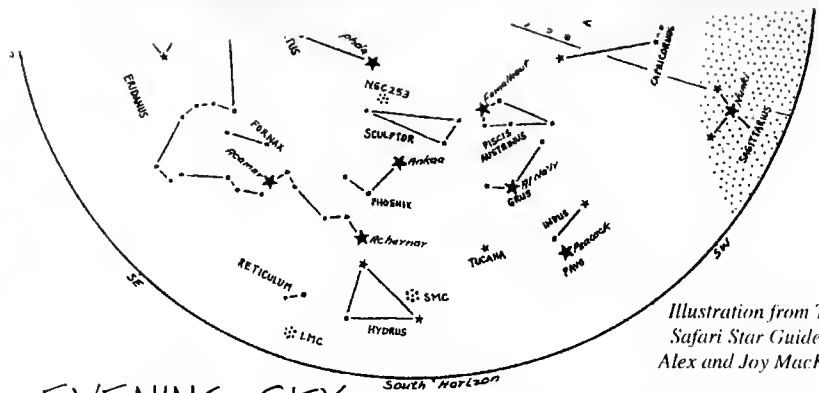
All Saints' Cathedral on Saturday 9 November 7:30 p.m. & Sunday 10 November 3:00 p.m.

Admission:
Adults 300/- (250/- with NMS cards)
Students 50/-

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DECLARATION

Nature Kenya does not accept any responsibility whatsoever in respect of negligence of any of its staff, volunteers or members organising the outings/trips or for any loss, injury, death or damage to property.



EVENING SKY

By Alex and Ian MacKay and Fleur Ng'weno

On a clear, dark November evening, you can see other galaxies beyond our own. Try viewing them with binoculars, too.

November Stars

Look to the south. A very bright star, Achernar, dominates the southern sky on November evenings. It is about halfway between the horizon and overhead. Above Achernar, almost overhead and a little to the west, is another bright star, Fomalhaut.

On a clear, dark evening, look below Achernar, close to the southern horizon. There seems to be a small cloud low in the southern sky. This cloud, however, does not move. It is not really a cloud, but a galaxy of stars, known as the Small Magellanic Cloud. Another galaxy, the Large Magellanic Cloud, lies even closer to the horizon. These galaxies can only be seen from the southern hemisphere and parts of the tropics.

Now look north. Low in the northern sky is the constellation CASSIOPEIA, shaped like the letter "M". High above, almost overhead, is the great square of PEGASUS, with a star at each corner of the square. Look carefully between the great square and the letter "M". Look for a small, blurry patch of light, like a fuzzy star. This is M31, the Andromeda nebula. This "fuzzy star" is a great spiral galaxy, made up of billions of stars. M31 is bigger than our own Milky Way galaxy, and about two million light years away.

Planets, November 2002

No planets are visible in the evening.

Mars, Jupiter and Saturn can be seen in the morning before dawn. (Mars is near the moon on November 2.) In the second half of November, Venus, the brightest planet, rises in the sunrise.

Moon, November 2002

4 Nov New moon • 11 Nov First quarter (overhead at sunset) • 20 Nov Full moon (partially eclipsed before rising) • 27 Nov Last quarter (rises at midnight)

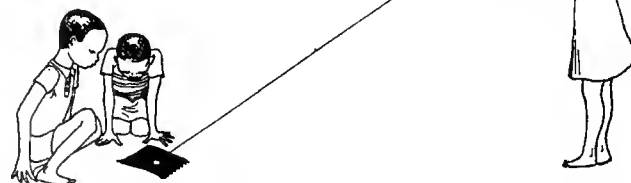
SOLAR ECLIPSE

On December 4, in the late afternoon, there will be an eclipse of the sun. The moon will move between the Earth and the sun, briefly blocking the sun's light. In East Africa it will be seen as a partial eclipse, which is much less dramatic. The sun's light is so bright that even with part of it blocked by the moon it still seems to shine brightly.

Do not try to look directly at a partial eclipse; the sun's light will damage your eyes, even with dark glasses. Instead, use a pinhole camera.

Take a piece of cardboard or stiff paper. Make a hole in it with a pin. Hold the paper so that it casts a shadow on the ground. Sunlight going through the hole should appear as a perfectly round spot of light on the paper's shadow. If the hole has wavy edges, it is too big, so make a smaller hole.

The round spot of light coming through the pinhole is an image of the sun. (You can see the same round spots among the shadows of leaves under a tree.) As the eclipse progresses, watch the round spot of light on the shadow of the paper. You can see a "bite" taken out of the sun as the moon moves across part of it.



REGULAR ACTIVITIES

BIRD RINGING

Meet at the Museum, Nairobi Botanic Garden, at 7:00 a.m. every Thursday.

SUNDAY BIRDWATCH

Members meet at the National Museum, Nairobi car park at 9:00 a.m. the third Sunday of every month, i.e. **17 November**. The members decide where to go. Bring lunch

TREE WALK

Guided Tree Walks in the Arboretum on the last Monday, i.e. **25 November from 9:30 a.m.** Meet at the FONA offices beside the Girl Guides HQ. Those who are not members of FONA or Nature Kenya pay Ksh 100/- fee on arrival at the gate.

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRDWALKS

Bird watching walks at sites in and around Nairobi. Meet at the National Museum car park every Wednesday at 8:45 a.m. Return about 12:30 p.m. Those who are not members can get temporary membership at Ksh 100 per birdwalk, payable on arrival at the car park.

ARABUKO-SOKOKE (COAST)

The Saturday birdwatch with the Arabuko Sokoke Forest Guides Association is on the first Saturday of each month i.e. **2 November, at 6:30 a.m.** from the Visitor Centre, Gede. Cost 100/- per person.

FFJ Bird Walk (Coast)

Friends of Fort Jesus birdwalks are held the third Saturday of each month i.e. **16 November, at 4:00 p.m.** Please call Marlene Reid on (011) 491 648 to confirm

Ngong Road Forest Walks, Nairobi

The Ngong Road Forest Sanctuary Trust Nature walks are held on the first and third Saturdays of the month i.e. **2 & 16 November, at 9:00 a.m.** Meet at the stairs leading to the Restaurant at the Racecourse.

NOVEMBER DIARY

Sat 2	ASF Birdwalks & NRF walk Trip to North Kinangop
Sun 10	Safaricom Race Day
Sat 16	FFJ Birdwalk & NRF walk
Sun 17	Sunday Birdwalk
Mon 25	Tree Walk
Birdwalks every Wednesday Morning	
Bird ringing every Thursday Morning	

Editor, Catherine Ngarachu

Bird Hotline 3749957

Sokoke Scops Owl, East Coast Akalat, Spotted Ground Thrush, Green-headed Oriole, Clarke's Weaver, Arabuka Sakake Forest/ Oct Colin Jackson, Brian Finch, Bernd de Bruijn, Itai Shanni, Shailesh Patel

Red-necked Phalarope, Gongani/ Oct Colin Jackson, Brian Finch, Bernd de Bruijn, Itai Shanni, Shailesh Patel

Broad-billed Sandpiper, African Skimmer, Sabaki River mauth/ Oct Brian Finch, Bernd de Bruijn, Itai Shanni, Shailesh Patel

Brown-headed Parrot, Kilifi - Kaloleni/ Oct Bernd de Bruijn, Itai Shanni, Shailesh Patel

Broad-billed Roller, Nairobi Museum grounds/ Sept Nature Kenya members

Woolly-necked Stork, Rasslyn River Garden Centre/ Sept Wednesday Morning Birdwalk

African Hobby Loresho/ Sept Bernd de Bruijn

Needed : A Volunteer Coordinator for World Birdwatch

A challenging, high-profile position for a person who is good at organising, good at communicating, and willing to spend the equivalent of one day per week in the Nature Kenya office.

World Birdwatch is a premier global bird event, held on the first weekend of October every other year. The volunteer coordinator is needed from November 2002 for a period of one year. This post does NOT require a previous knowledge of birds! However, it requires dedication and flair.

For more information, please contact Catherine Ngarachu or Fleur Ng'weno in the Nature Kenya office.

Calling All Bird Guides

Are you an experienced birdwatcher? Are you interested in guiding visitors, tourists or student groups who want to see Kenya's birds?

Then please send the following to Bird Guide Register at Nature Kenya:

1. Name
2. Address
3. Phone/fox
4. E-mail contact if possible
5. Summary CV including the following :
 - a) For how many years have you observed or studied birds?
 - b) Where or how did you observe or study?
 - c) Have you attended any special courses? Which?
 - d) How much experience do you have in guiding groups?
 - e) What languages (both foreign and local) do you speak?
6. Are you available
 - a) part-time (one day or half a day)?
 - b) full-time (several days)?
7. Do you have a driving license and are currently able to drive a tour vehicle?
8. Are you a member of the Kenya Professional Tour Guides Association?
9. Optional: Minimum fee expected for one day's work.....

Compiling Bird Lists?

Important Information for Camps, Lodges, Site Support Groups or Protected Area staff!

Are you compiling a bird list for a camp, lodge, forest, wetland, bird sanctuary or protected area?

Then contact the Bird Committee of the East Africa Natural History Society at Nature Kenya for advice. Email office@noturekenyo.org putting 'Bird Committee' in the subject line.

The Bird Committee publishes the authoritative *Check list of the Birds of Kenya*, manages the Kenya Bird Database, and is made up of representatives from Nature Kenya and National Museums of Kenya, Ornithology Department.

They will help you to make your bird list accurate and up to date.

SCOPUS



Scopus is the journal of the Bird Committee of the East Africa Natural History Society, and has been published since 1977.

Scopus publishes original material on all aspects of ornithology from the eastern African region (Sudan south to Mozambique, Rwanda and Burundi and east to the Indian Ocean islands). Articles are peer-reviewed and consist of papers and short communications. *Scopus* is published as one or two issues per year, or as submissions dictate. There were recent gaps and delays in publication, but it is now back on track. The Editorial Board is composed of G. C. Backhurst, Dr L. A. Bennun, Dr L. Lens, Dr J. A. Lindsell, Dr D. J. Pearson, Prof D. E. Pomeroy, D.A. Tümer.

All contributions for publication should be sent to the Editor, Dr Jeremy Lindsell.

E-mail to jeremy.lindsell@rspb.org.uk (if you are sending an attachment please make sure *Scopus* appears in the subject line of the email message). By post to Dr Jeremy Lindsell, c/o RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL, UK.

Volumes 21 and 22 of *Scopus* are available from the Nature Kenya office at Ksh.500 each for Nature Kenya or Nature Uganda members, and Ksh.800 each for non-members. (Plus Ksh.200 for postage and handling if you wish them mailed to you.) Most previous issues are available as well.

To receive the next issue, *Scopus* Volume 23, please send Nature Kenya

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D. A. Ewbank. **Long-toed Plover *Vanellus crassirostris* foot-stirring.**

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R. Glen and S. Stolberger. **Black-faced Red-Billed Hornbills *Tockus erythrorynchus* in Ruaha National Park, south-western Tanzania.**

R.J. Stafford. **Use of clearings by Humblot's Flycatcher *Humblotia flavirostris*.**

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Phil Shaw. **Contact call of the Stripe-breasted Tit *Parus fasciiventer*.**

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M. Mollalieu. **Grey-olive Greenbul *Phyllastrephus cerviniventris* in and near Meru National Park.**

T.B. Oatley. **Some range extensions of birds in northern Tanzania.**

Edward Hall. **Recent sightings of Purple Swamphen *Porphyrio porphyria* and other uncommon intra-African migrants in Khartoum.**