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### MARCH AT A GLIMPSE

SAT 10	TREE WALK
THU 15	TALK ON BATS
SUN 18	SUNDAY BIRDWALK
SUN 25	TREE RELAY RUN
MON 26	TREE WALK
THU 29	TALK BY AKBAR HUSSEIN

BIRDWALKS EVERY WEDNESDAY MORNING  
BIRD RINGING EVERY THURSDAY MORNING

## EDITORIAL TEAM

EDITOR CATHERINE NGARACHU  
EVENING SKIES FLEUR NG'WENO  
NATURALIST DINO MARTINS  
ACTION SERAH MUNGUTI

Arboretum centennial activities

## Old Nairobi and its public spaces

Talk by Akbar Hussein  
Thursday 29 March

Akbar Hussein is a photographer and historian. He will give an illustrated lecture on the history of Nairobi, with a focus on public spaces and green zones of the city.

## Tree Relay Run Sunday 25 March

Come running at the Arboretum! You need a team of 4 runners, one of whom should be female. Runs begin at 9:00 a.m.

Register at least one week in advance at the Friends of Nairobi Arboretum office, at the Arboretum, with 500/- per team. There are prizes for the fastest and for the most original team!

For more information tel (20) 2725471 or email [fona@naturekenya.org](mailto:fona@naturekenya.org)

## Annual General Meeting

of the East Africa Natural History Society

Tuesday 24 April 07  
at 4:00 p.m.  
at the Louis Leakey Hall,  
National Museums, Nairobi

For nominations to the Executive Committee please collect forms at the office

## Bats: how they feed and navigate in the dark

Talk by Bernard Agwanda

Thur 15 March  
Louis Leakey Hall, Nairobi  
Museum at 5:30 p.m.

Topics to be covered include:

- Bats and their value in the environment
- Types of bats and where to find which
- Pollination
- Evolution
- Echolocation and avoidance of background noise
- Ecology of echolocation: interaction between flight, food, and foraging
- The human mimic of bat echolocation to enable blind people to 'see'

Bernard Agwanda is a research scientist at the Department of Mammalogy, National Museums of Kenya.

## WESTERN KENYA TRIP Fri 6 to Mon 9 April

Places to visit: Mt.Elgon, Saiwa Swamp, Kapenguria and Kitale Museums and Kitale Sanctuary.

Camping: Saiwa Swamp National Park.

Bring: Tent, Sleeping bag, comfortable walking shoes, water bottle, warm clothing and Nature Kenya membership card.

Cost: Ksh 5000 per person. Includes transport, food and camping fees. Please note that the park entrance and camping fees for Mt.Elgon and Saiwa Swamp National Parks are not included in the trip cost.

# Ecotourism at Arabuko Sokoke Forest and Mida Creek upbeat

Francis Kagema

An eco-tourism marketing campaign for Arabuko-Sokoke Forest and Mida Creek is giving direct benefits to the communities living adjacent to the two sites. To prepare communities to better handle visitors to the north Coast in Kenya community groups have been trained on group management, governance and professional guiding skills. The project is funded by Kindernothilfe and NABU (BirdLife in Germany) and the effort has borne much fruit:

In 2006 the Arabuko-Sokoke Forest Guides Association, a team of 20 community guides, guided 3000 visitors to the Forest and earned Ksh 250,000.

Mida Creek has seen even more impressive results. The first paying visitors went to site in 2003 after the mangrove

boardwalk was established by ARocha Kenya. Income from the boardwalk is paid to a secondary school bursary scheme benefiting local children. Comprising 27 members, the Mida Creek Conservation and Awareness group organizes picnics and provides guiding and canoe riding services to visitors. In 2006 alone, more than 3000 tourists visited Mida Creek, generating Ksh. 120,000 from canoeing, Ksh. 100,000 from guiding and Ksh. 380,000 from the board walk.



action

From District Environment Committees  
to Village Environment Committees

Evarastus Obura

The Lake Victoria Sunset Birders, a Site Support Group of Nature Kenya, has stimulated the establishment of two Village Environment Committees in Nyamasaria and Dunga areas on the shores of Lake Victoria. The committees discuss environmental issues at village level and the information generated feeds into the District Environment Committee.

The local Site Support Group has conducted an environmental education and outreach programme for communities and six schools around Dunga Swamp since 2002. As a result, 35 community members are involved in site monitoring, more than 300 trees have been planted in schools, all the schools have built bird-feeding tables and are involved in a waste management programme. By marketing the site and training local guides, earnings to the community from ecotourism and cultural tourism has increased from Ksh. 1000 in 2002 to Ksh. 5,400 in 2006.

Pleiades

Moon

Venus

## The Evening Sky March 2007

Ian Mackay and Fleur Ng'weno

### Lunar Eclipse, 3-4 March 2007

There is a total eclipse of the full moon on the night of March 3 to 4. The earth passes between the sun and the moon, casting its shadow over the moon. The moon does not appear totally black, however.

Light from the sun is refracted through the earth's atmosphere. The light is bent, and much of the blue colour is absorbed. The light that reaches the moon makes it look a rich orange, red or brown colour.

In East Africa, the moon is eclipsed all night. It is a celestial show well worth watching!

The other phases of the moon:

12 March Last quarter

19 March New moon

25 March First quarter

### Sun, March 2007

March 21 is the equinox, when day and night are the same length all over the world. In Nairobi, close to the equator, the midday sun is almost directly overhead. Until the other equinox in September, the sun will be in the north at midday.

### Planets, March 2007

Brilliant Venus remains steady over the sunset during the month of March. It is near the

moon on March 21. The next four months will see Venus rising higher and setting later.

Across the sky, Saturn rises in the east at sunset. Saturn is southeast of the moon on March 2, and south of the moon on March 29.

Bright Jupiter is in the east after midnight, and high overhead at dawn. It is north of the moon on March 12. Mars and Mercury are also visible just before dawn. Near the end of March, tiny Mercury will be relatively high and bright. It is northwest of the moon on March 17 before sunrise.

### September Stars

Look in the northern sky for bright stars forming the corners of a pentagon. This is the constellation Auriga, with a very bright star, Capella.

The brightest star at night, Sirius, the dog star, is high in the south. The second brightest star, Canopus, is lower in the sky. The constellation of Orion lies high overhead (see February Stars).

Sirius, the orange star Betelgeuse in Orion, and the star Procyon, or little dog, form a great triangle in the sky. East of Orion and north of Procyon are two bright stars fairly close together. These are Gemini, the twins. East of Procyon and Gemini is the planet Saturn.



## Storks on the Move!

Dino Martins

The vast plains of the Serengeti and the rolling grasslands of Ngorongoro Crater are home to some of the most spectacular congregations of wildlife including large numbers of wildebeest, zebra and other grazers.

This year the area, like most of Eastern Africa, is lush and green due to the incredible rains that have persisted from October well into what should now be the 'dry' season. As a result the savannahs and grasslands of Northern Tanzania are covered with the lush growth of grasses.

In addition to the large herds of grazing and browsing mammals, hundreds of different kinds of birds can be seen feeding on the plains and around the edges of the innumerable ponds of water that have formed on the plains.

On a recent trip through the region (Jan 28 - Feb 7), large numbers of White Storks *Ciconia ciconia* and Abdim's Storks *Ciconia abdimii* were evident. The Abdim's Storks were most abundant in Ngorongoro Crater and the adjacent highland grasslands while the White Storks were common on the grassland shores of Lake Manyara and on the short grass plains around Naabi Hill in the Serengeti.

Both the Abdim's Stork and the White Stork are visitors to the East African grasslands and savannahs. However, while they may be found feeding in mixed flocks, they have journeyed from very different places to meet in the Serengeti.

Abdim's Stork is a species that breeds further north and migrates into the area to feed on the large numbers of insects available on the plains.

This sort of regional migration is known as an intra-African migrant. With their multicoloured blue and red faces they pace steadfast through the grass in the wake of the herds snapping up grasshoppers, dung beetles and fat termite alates as they emerge from the ground.

The White Stork has journeyed to these plains from even further afield. This remarkable bird breeds in Europe, where it has been a favourite, given that pairs of storks often return to the same nest site year after year. In fact, this species is the stork of legend that is 'responsible' for bringing human babies in spring! When the breeding season and the summer is over, the White Storks embark on an incredible journey travelling south through Mediterranean and North Africa onto the plains of East and Southern Africa.

A number of White Storks on the Serengeti plains could be seen wearing rings on their legs. This means that they are part of groups that have been tagged by ornithologists who are monitoring their journeys and movements across the world. They are threatened by pesticide use and habitat loss in their breeding grounds and by hunting en route as they migrate.

It is a real challenge and opportunity to conserve species such as the White Stork that need habitats spread across the world. This is one species that can serve as a means of uniting conservation efforts across the world, bringing together birders and scientists from many different countries.

Questions/Comments?  
Email [dinojmv@oeb.horvord.edu](mailto:dinojmv@oeb.horvord.edu)



For more Chris Madden cartoons buy his book "The Beast that ate the Earth" from his website

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## BIRDWALKS

### WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRDWALKS

Bird watching walks at sites in and around Nairobi. Meet at the National Museum car park near Langi Langi cafe, 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.

### SUNDAY BIRDWATCH

Members meet at the National Museum, Nairobi car park near Langi Langi cafe at 9:00 a.m. the third Sunday of every month, i.e. 18 MAR '07. The members decide where to go. Bring lunch

### KINANGOP BIRDING

Friends of Kinangop Plateau organise birdwalks every third Friday of the month i.e. 16 MAR. 07 at 9:00 a.m. around Magumu and Njambini areas. To participate contact Bakari Ng'ang'a on 0721 470215

### FFJ BIRDWALK (Coast)

Friends of Fort Jesus birdwalks are held the third Saturday of each month, i.e. 17 MAR. '07. Please call Marlene Reid on 2491648 or 0720 949195 to confirm

### TREE WALKS

Guided tree walks in the Arboretum on the second Saturday and last Monday, i.e. 10 and 26 MAR 07 from 9:30 a.m. Meet at the Arboretum gate. Those who are not members of FONA or Nature Kenya pay Ksh 100/- fee on arrival at the gate.

### BIRD RINGING

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

### ARABUKO-SOKOKE (Coast)

The Saturday birdwatch with the Arabuko Sokoke Forest Guides Association is on the first Saturday of each month i.e. 3 MAR. '07, at 6:30 a.m. from the Visitor Centre, Gede. Cost 100/- per person. KWS fees now apply (100/- Citizens, 500/- Residents)

### LAKE VICTORIA SUNSET BIRDERS (Kisumu)

The Lake Victoria Sunset Birders organise bird walks at sites in and around Kisumu every Friday of the month. For further details call 057 42952 or 0734 994938 or email lakevictoriasunsetbirders@yahoo.co.uk

### MT KENYA BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION GROUP (MKBCG)

The MKBCG organise bird walks to sites around Naro Moru every last Saturday of the month i.e. 31 MAR. '07.

For more information contact 0722 364904, 0733 937115 or 062 62071 Email: mt\_kebio@yahoo.co.uk

### MARURA NAROK BIRDWATCHERS

A community group near Uaso Narok Swamp, Rumuruti, which organises birdwalks every last Saturday i.e. 31 MAR. '07. Call 062 32718 or email olmaisor@africaonline.co.ke

### NGONG ROAD FOREST WALKS

Ngong Road Forest Sanctuary Trust nature walks held the first and third Saturdays of the month i.e. 3 & 17 MAR. '07, at 9:00 a.m. Meet at the stairs leading to the Restaurant at the Racecourse. Call Ignatius ;to confirm on 3875207 or 0720 976299.

### SAMAKI DAYS

Guided fish excursions on the first Thursday, i.e. 1 MAR '07 from 9:00 a.m - 12:30 p.m. Meet at the Nairobi Museum car park. Pay Ksh 50/- per person on arrival