



Quest for Shoebill! 7th - 9th September

Visit Uganda - the Mpigi area along Kampala-Masaka road - with a possible night stopover at Jinja town

Mpigi is a wetland area while Mabamba Bay is an Important Bird Area and Ramsar site. The Shoebill is the flagship bird species for Mabamba Bay.

The cost for the whole tour is KSH 5000 per person, inclusive of humble accommodation, transport from Kisumu, meals.

Organised by the Lake Victoria Sunset Birders (LVSBS) together with Wildlife Clubs of Kenya Kisumu (WCK) and the Wildlife Clubs of Uganda (WCU) For further details please contact:

Philip - 0721 263 797
Mike - 0734 994 938

Buy a Cooking basket



Save fuel and money by using a basket.

From 700/- at the Nature Kenya office

AUGUST AT A GLIMPSE

THU 2	SAMAKI OUTING
SAT 11	TREE WALK
SUN 19	SUNDAY BIRDWALK
MON 27	TREE WALK
THU 30	WATER HARVESTING TALK
	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

Fundamentals of Herpetology

This herpetofauna training is of interest to members interested in learning more about Amphibians and Reptiles. It will be held every Wednesday of the week between 1 and 2 p.m. at the Invertebrate Zoology Lab, Natural Sciences Building, at the National Museums, Nairobi. Lectures begin 18 July.

Registration fee is Ksh. 200/- person with an additional course fee of Ksh. 100 per lecture (i.e. per Wednesday session).

**Organised by
Kenya Herpetofauna Working
Group (KHWG)**

Arboretum Centennial
lecture, at the Nairobi
Arboretum's Tree Centre:

Water Harvesting Thu 30 August 5:30 p.m.

(Entrance fee 100 Shillings, students free. Coffee and tea is served from 5 pm. Guarded parking space provided)

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Corporate members
for their very valuable
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* Kenya Airways

Library has closed for relocation to new permanent premises. This will take a few months - watch this space for opening dates!



Fleur Ng'weno receives Eve award

Fleur who emerged the winner in the category of Wildlife and Conservation of this years Eve Award, receives her award at a Wednesday Morning Birdwalk



At the Project launch event held at the Nairobi Aboretum left to right: Nature Kenya Chairman Dr Ian Gordon, the Tourism Trust Fund CEO Mr Dan Kagagi, the EU Head of Delegation HE Eric van der Linden, Chairman TTF Mr O Ole Kamuaro, and representative for Ms Rebecca Nabutola PS Min. of Tourism and Wildlife

Have you seen this Vulture?



A number of vultures in the Maro ond Serengeti are tagged. If you see one, please note the number, date, time, and location (by GPS or nearest landmark). Kindly e-mail information to any of the following addresses:

tonzonibirds@yahoo.com
pkirui@mitsuminet.com mkaiikai@hotmail.com
tpf@ofriconline.co.ke

Play a part for the Mara-Serengeti... report tagged vultures.

Vultures play an important role by feeding on wildebeest and zebra that die during their migration. It is estimated that vultures (not lions and hyenas) consume nearly 70% of the dead animals in the Mara-Serengeti ecosystem.

If vultures disappeared from the Mara-Serengeti ecosystem, the sights and smells of rotting animal carcasses would turn away millions of visitors denying Kenya and Tanzania revenue.

Vulture populations are fast disappearing in Africa. In South Asia and parts of West Africa, populations have declined by as much as 98 percent over the last decade. They face poisoning, habitat loss and persecution.



The Vulture Project is aimed at improving our knowledge about vulture ecology so that conservation interventions are based on sound scientific principles.



advanced guide training.

Launch of Bird tourism project

The project to be implemented by Nature Kenya, with funding from the EU-TTF, aims to enhance Kenya's potential as a bird tourism destination through targeted marketing and

By building on conservation gains made at Important Bird Areas (IBAs), the project will endeavor to create a demand for Kenya's avifauna attractions as well as enhance the visitor experience by providing a high quality visitor interpretation product through a well trained pool of professional bird guides for the country.

Illustrations: White Stork by Andrew Kamiti and Marabou Stork by Nani Croze

The plight of Marabou Storks in the environs of Wajir Town

By Jacob Mueti Ngwava
0720144168



I had coveted visiting the arid parts of northern Kenya for quite a long time. My main interest was to have a glimpse of the biodiversity of the region. With scarce water resources what did the life forms here look like? Some kilometres past Garissa town on my way to Wajir town, there were several scattered dwarf desert shrubs observable on the vast land. Here and there, I would observe a herd of giraffes, several ostriches, cattle egrets accompanying a herd of zebras, here a gazelle and over there a hungry hyena. It was really amazing and inspiring to find such rich diversity in this dry land.

There are thousands of Marabou Storks in the environs of Wajir town. These are of great importance in this ecosystem inhabited by livestock keepers who have meat as their staple food. Being scavengers, these birds help in sanitation of the area by feeding on dead animal remains. They are believed to have a very advanced digestive system that enables them to feed even on very tough bones. If a bone is too hard they pick it, fly high and release it to strike upon a rock in which case it will break so that they can easily feed on the smaller fragments.

On the following morning I woke up early and by eight was on my way to the Kenya Wildlife Service station in Wajir town. What I saw from the gate to up to ten metres from the Warden's office was shocking to say the least. Several bones of all kinds were observable scattered everywhere beneath the electric wires. I identified them as avian bones. Moving to the office I didn't find the Warden in charge, but was fortunate to find a game ranger on duty who gave me some insight regarding the scenario.

During the breeding season these birds visit the areas adjacent to the KWS station, which enjoys close proximity to a watering point known as Lake Yahoood, in large numbers. Unused to the electric wires, several birds end up perching on these lines. The lines have been positioned horizontally and parallel to each other. Since the birds are wide they complete the electric circuit and are badly electrocuted. That is what qualifies the area outside the Wajir KWS Warden's office to be called the valley of dry bones. Can nothing be done to save the Marabou Storks?

The Evening Sky July 2007

Ian Mackay and Fleur Ng'weno

Moon, August 2007

Last quarter, 5th; New moon, 13th; First quarter, 21st; Full moon, 28th;

Planets' magnitudes

August 2007
Mercury -1.3
Venus -4.3
Mars 0.5
Jupiter -2.3
Saturn 0.6

Planets, August 2007

Venus, Saturn and Mercury sink into the sunset this month, to reappear later in the morning sky. Brilliant Venus and bright Saturn are together low in the west, among the stars of the constellation Leo the lion. On August 1st Venus and Saturn form a tight group with the star Regulus (only 10 degrees). Saturn is in conjunction with Venus on the 9th. On the 13th, the new moon occults Saturn.

Bright Jupiter is high in the south, close to the constellation Scorpio the scorpion. The moon is nearby from August 20th to 22nd. With binoculars or a telescope on a clear, dark night, you can see some of the moons orbiting Jupiter. On August 6, 15 and 23, Jupiter's moon Callisto seems to be quite far from its planet.

In the morning sky before dawn, Mars is among the stars of the constellation Taurus the bull. During August, Mars moves past the Hyades cluster that forms the head of the

bull. The spectacular morning of the 7th will find Mars between the star clusters of Pleiades and Hyades, with the moon nearby. On the 24th, Mars is just north of the reddish star Aldebaran.

August Stars

The constellation Scorpio is high in the southern sky in the evening. Look for the reddish star Antares, the scorpion's fiery eye. Bright stars above it are the scorpion's pincers. Below Antares, a line of stars curve like a fishhook. These are the scorpion's body and tail, with two stars as the stinger.

Below Scorpio, in the south, are two very bright stars halfway up from the horizon. These are Alpha Centauri and Beta Centauri in the constellation of the Centaur. (According to the myths of ancient Greece, a centaur was half-man, half-horse.)

The bright blue-white star Spica is west of Scorpio, high in the sky. On August 18th, Spica is just north of the moon. The bright orange star Arcturus is high in the northwest, and the brilliant white star Vega is low in the northeast.

The Milky Way stretches across the sky, from the Southern Cross in the southwest, across the Centaur, across the Scorpion, to the east of Vega. This broad pale band is our galaxy, made up of millions and millions of stars.

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For more information, brochure and non-member rates please contact Nature Kenya. Guest House rates: Day visit 350/-

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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 of 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. 19 AUG. '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. 17 AUG '07 at 9:00 a.m. around Mogumu and Njombini areas. To participate contact Bokari Ng'ang'a on 0721 470215

FFJ BIRDWALK (Coast)

Friends of Fort Jesus birdwalks are held the third Saturday of each month, i.e. 18 AUG '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. 11 and 27 AUG 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. 4 AUG. '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. 25 AUG. '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. 25 AUG. '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. 4 & 18 AUG '07, at 9:00 a.m. Meet at the stairs leading to the Restaurant at the Racecourse. Call Simon to confirm on 3875207 or 0729 840715.

SAMAKI DAYS

Guided fish excursions on the first Thursday, i.e. 5 AUG '07 from 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Meet at the Nairobi Museum car park. Pay Ksh 50/- per person on arrival

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