

# nature net

The Nature Kenya Newsletter

March 2000

## TALKS & VIDEOS

There is much more to Zebras and Dolphins than meets the eye. Come and get the full story in two excellent videos:

**Zebra - The Trailblazers** (30 min, BBC) and  
**Dolphins - The Wild Side**, (30 mins, Natural World)

**Monday 13 March '00, 5:30 p.m. at the National Museums of Kenya, In the Louis Leakey M. Hall.**  
(There will be transport to town afterwards)

## SUCCULENTA, Talk on Plectranthus

Saturday 1 April, 10:00 a.m.

To be given by **Catherine Lukhoba**, a plant systematist at Nairobi University. This will be held in the Botanic Garden office situated beyond the front of the National Museum on the right hand side as the road goes to the left.

Thereafter a coffee break at the Museum cafeteria, to be followed by a walk through the Botanic Garden.

## WHAT'S NEW!

### Arabuko-Sokoke Forest Tree House

The tree house is located in the old sand quarry approximately 2.5km from the Kenya Wildlife Service Visitor Centre. It is a simple platform perched about 8m up in a *Hymenaea verrucosa*, 'mtandarusi' or 'Gum Copal' tree, with the decking made from purchased cedar. The hardwood steps made from confiscated timber are supported by a *Dialium orientale*, 'mpepeti' tree. The tree house is open to the elements but the broken canopy of the Gum copal tree gives adequate shade most of the time.

The view from the platform is out over the sand quarry that was mined in 1970 - 1988 by Kenya Glass to extract the pure white silica sand that was used in glass making. After the extraction operation closed, the Forest Department tried replanting with *Cassia siamiae*, but with little success due to the poor fertility of the soil. A few specimens are still in evidence throughout the quarried area.



However, the pools do fill in the rainy season and provide an ideal habitat for a variety of water birds as well as over 17 species of frog. Raptors including African Fish Eagle, Great Sparrowhawk and African Harrier Hawk often pass overhead and at dusk Bat Hawks are on the wing.

Constructed in November 1999 this is the first joint venture of the Friends of Arabuko-Sokoke Forest and the Arabuko-Sokoke Forest Management and Conservation Project. Andy Payne, an A Rocha Kenya volunteer, did all the construction with the aid of two ASF casuals. The Project paid for all the materials while Turtle Bay Beach Club as a Friend of Arabuko-Sokoke Forest provided for Andy's food and accommodation. Bob Garbett, a Club guest, donated screws from England, and Van Davis, also a Friend, lent his chain saw.

#### Basic information

**Location:** Sand quarry, 2.5km from Visitor Centre.

**Daytime visiting:** Free of charge, but donations for maintenance welcome at Visitor Centre.

**Overnights in Tree House:** Ksh 200 per person, booking and payment at Visitor Centre, (tel: 0122 32102)

**Daytime parking:** Carpark A or Carpark B at forest plantation boundary

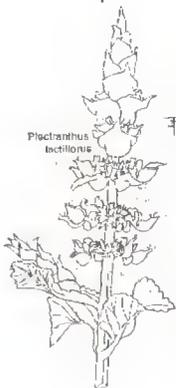
**Night time parking:** Car park C at Elephant track junction

**Services:** Bush toilet close to Carpark C

**NOTE:** All other requirements must be provided by overnights and all rubbish must be removed from site.

## Action for Biodiversity Conservation

NATURE KENYA, P. O. Box 44486, Nairobi. Tel: 749957 / 746090 Fax: 741049 E-mail: eanhs@africaonline.co.ke



## ACTIVITIES

### FRIENDS OF NAIROBI ARBORETUM

#### Annual General Meeting

The Friends AGM, will be held at the Arboretum on **Saturday 11 March from 11:00 a.m.** Bring a picnic.

#### COMPOST COURSE FOR GARDENERS

Gardeners will learn how to turn the waste from kitchen, trees, and other rubbish into a useful substance that can be used to improve gardens.

To be held at the Nairobi Arboretum on **Monday 20 March, from 9.30 a.m.** meeting at the main gate at 9:00 a.m.

Charges are 250/-. All proceeds go towards the maintenance of the Arboretum. Call Daniel Kathurima at 749957 / 746090 to book.

## EXCURSIONS

### Succulenta Trip to the Ngong Hills

**Saturday 11 March** meet at Corner Baridi at 09:00. To get to Corner Baridi take the road to Magadi passing through Ongata Rongai and Kiserian. Climb to the highest point and stop before the road drops down behind the Ngong Hills.

Wait for the other cars and we will then drive on looking for *Euphorbia scarlatina*, *Adenia* and many other succulents. 4X4 vehicles are advisable. Bring picnic lunch, water, hats and walking shoes. Please contact Sue Allan, tel: 891190 or Carin Parfitt, tel: 882827, if you are coming and can give or require a lift.

#### Windsor Golf and Country Club, Saturday 25 March

Full morning birdwalk led by the resident naturalist. The dams and forest around the golf course make for interesting walks and good birdwatching.

You need to book with the office for this field trip. **Deadline: 15 March**

To book transport in the Nature Kenya Landrover: kshs 120/- per person

Meet at the National Museum car park at 6:45 a.m. Bring binoculars, hat, drinking water and walking shoes.

SPECIAL OFFER FROM WINDSOR Members who wish to stay on after the birdwalk, for lunch and use the club swimming pool, can do so @ 1100/- per person.

## WORKSHOP ON ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE IN KENYA

UNEP, Nairobi, March 29-31

The Environmental Management and Co-ordination Act, 1999, was passed by Parliament in December, received Presidential Assent on 6 January 2000 and became law on 14 January 2000. The workshop will serve to launch the Act to the public. It will also review the status of environmental management in Kenya and the role of sectoral laws and statutes within the framework environmental Act.

The workshop is organised by the Centre for Research and Education on Environmental Law (CREEL) of the Faculty of Law, University of Nairobi, with support from the Royal Netherlands Embassy. For details, contact the Programme Co-ordinator, Julius Kemboi, at phone 742-261-4, fax 743-565 or e-mail creel9@hotmail.com

## MONTH DIARY

- Wed 1** Birdwalk
- Sat 4** Arabuko Sokoke Walk
- Wed 8** Birdwalk
- Sat 11** FONA AGM & Succulenta trip
- Wed 15** Birdwalk
- Sun 19** PotLuck Bird Outing
- Mon 20** Compost Course
- Wed 22** Birdwalk
- Sat 25** Birdwalk at Windsor
- Mon 27** Tree Walk
- Wed 29** Birdwalk

## REGULAR MONTHLY ACTIVITIES

### 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 Kshs 100 per birdwalk, payable on arrival at the car park.

*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.*

### POT LUCK OUTINGS

Bird-watching outings held on every third Sunday of the month, *i.e.* **19 March**. Bring a picnic lunch, binoculars, field guides, *etc.* and meet at 9:00 am at the National Museum car park. Those attending decide on the venue - hence "Pot Luck".

### TREE WALK

Arboretum guided Tree Walks on the last Monday of every month *i.e.* **27 March from 9:30 a.m.** Meet at the FONA offices beside the Girl Guides HQ.

### ARABUKO SOKOKE (COAST)

**BIRD WALKS** - The Saturday birdwatch with the Arabuko Sokoke Forest Guides Association is on the first Saturday of each month *i.e.* **4 March, at 6:30 a.m.** from the Visitor Centre, Gede. Cost 100/- per person.



Editor - Catherine Ngarachu  
Cover photo by Solomon Mwangi Ngari