

# nature net

The NatureKenya Newsletter

August 2000

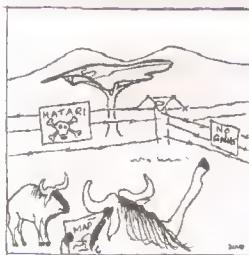
NAIROBI  
MAIN LINE

## ACTIVITIES

### EXCURSIONS

#### Field Visit to Kitengela

Sat 26 August '00

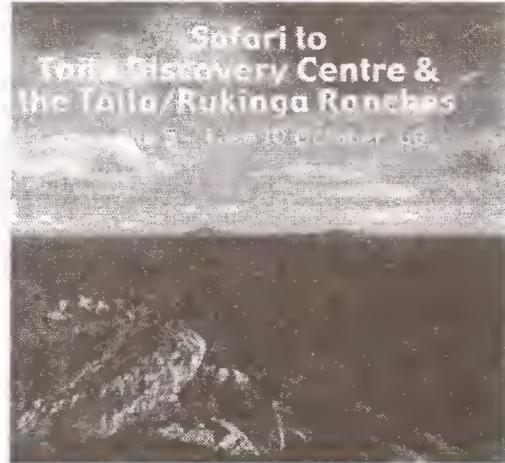


'I told you so - ! We should have turned right.'

Meet at the Museum car park at 7:45 a.m. for 8:00 a.m. departure or meet at Kitengela Glass parking at 9:00 a.m. Bring your picnic lunch and drinking water.

Escape the cold of Nairobi and come out to hot, dusty, dry Kitengela. The morning walk will take you along the Kiserian and Mbagathi looking at birds and insects.

Far those wha wish ta stay an, an afternoon walk across the plains will illustrate the challenges facing conservation and biodiversity in the region.



The Taita / Rukinga Ranches are an enormous (800 sq. kms) stretch of unspoilt private and community owned wilderness that is nestled between Tsavo East and West. It forms a vital corridor route across the "Taru Desert" for a population of almost one thousand elephants and one hundred lion as they migrate between the Galana River in Tsavo East south to the foothills of Mt. Kilimanjaro and Lake Jipe in Tsavo West.

All overnights and meals, will be provided by the Taita Discovery Centre (TDC) from lunch on the Thursday to the packed lunch on the Tuesday.

**Thursday 5** Meet at the Museum car park at 7:00 a.m. for a 7:30 a.m. departure. Estimated travel time is 6 hours so carry a snack and enough ta drink. Late afternoon birdwalk around the centre.

**Friday 6** Full morning escorted birdwalk, while looking out for game.

**Saturday 7** Spend the day tracking the Taita/ Rukinga elephants and learning about them.

**Sunday 8** Day ta Tsavo NP. or Taita Hills

**Monday 9** Hike up Mt. Kasigau.

**Tuesday 10** Departure after breakfast for Nairobi.  
**What to bring:** Binoculars and field guide and personal effects. (Bedding with mosquito nets and drinking water is provided). There is a small cash bar and gift shop.

**Book and pay by 15 September plus note declaration in the Regular Activities column of the newsletter.**

#### Cost:

Per person sharing with meals 8500/-

Children U12 sharing with meals 4250/-

Camping possible but no change in rate.

Rates not inclusive of transport or park fees/Ranger fees.

## VIDEOS

### ATTENBOROUGH IN PARADISE



Video about the Birds of Paradise of Papua New Guinea

Monday 14 August '00,  
5:30 p.m. at the National Museums of Kenya, Louis Leakey M. Hall  
Transport to town will be available.

Editor, Catherine Ngarachu

## Action for Biodiversity Conservation

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

## WHAT'S NEW!

### Report on Fifth CONFERENCE OF PARTIES (COP5) OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY(CBD), May 15 - 27, Nairobi



Nature Kenya was actively involved in the COP5 of the Convention on Biological Diversity. A number of staff and members took part in the meeting, and Paul Matiku of the Important Bird Areas (IBA) programme was invited to join the Kenyan delegation. Nature Kenya and BirdLife International jointly managed a stand to provide information and materials, and launched the Africa IBA poster as a side event. Nature Kenya also provided birdwalks for the delegates on the UNEP grounds, recording a late migratory sedge warbler on May 23.



The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was one of the concrete, negotiated agreements to come out of the Earth Summit - the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development - held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992. Eight years on, the CBD has been signed and ratified by 177 countries, who are the Parties to the Convention. Five Conference of Parties (COP) have now been held.

At the COP5 of the CBD in Nairobi in May, documents seemed to breed like rabbits. For anyone sitting through it, it was easy to get lost in a maze of declarations and workplans on what the world should be doing to conserve biodiversity, and hard to see how these workplans were going to get implemented. Yet the world takes the Convention on Biological Diversity very seriously, as was evident by the participation of over 900 government delegates, around 500 NGO representatives, many representatives of private industry, and over 60 representatives of Indigenous Peoples.

The CBD is followed with avid interest even by countries which have not ratified the Convention, such as the United States. Why is this? One reason is that the Convention serves to debate issues that go to the core of globalisation, versus the protection of non-economic values in an economic world. Conservation is only one of the three objectives of the CBD. The other two, around which much of the debate revolves, are the sustainable use of biodiversity, and fair and equitable sharing of the benefits of biodiversity. The latter two objectives recognise that we cannot conserve biodiversity by locking it up in a park or a zoo; use it, and use it equitably, or lose it.

#### Regulating Living Modified Organisms

A major success for the Convention, a Biosafety Protocol was agreed upon last January, allowing nations to regulate trade in Genetically Modified Organisms, or as they are now called LMOs (living modified organisms). LMOs logically came under the umbrella of Biodiversity concerns, as there is fear that careless use of genetically engineered organisms could unleash dominant, foreign genes into ecosystems, and cause biological simplification (loss of diversity).

The Protocol is an international legal agreement within the Convention. It is designed to address the uncertainty and incomplete nature of scientific knowledge on how LMOs interact with biodiversity and the surrounding environment. Where previously such trade had no restrictions, now a receiving country can choose to restrict trade in LMOs on environmental or health grounds, and to set rules on liability and labelling, while the burden of proof of safety falls to the exporting country. This Protocol, if well implemented, can serve to protect the interests of both consumers and farmers, and to regulate the activities of multi-national biotechnology companies.

The Biosafety Protocol was opened for signature at the Conference of Parties in Nairobi with great fanfare, and has now been signed by 68 countries. It will, however, undoubtedly face challenges from the World Trade Organisation, which takes the position that restriction of trade on environmental grounds is not allowed.

#### Owning Knowledge?

Similarly, issues of protection of traditional knowledge and access to and benefit sharing from biodiversity are part of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Here again, the Convention is tackling, head-on, the major trade-environment concerns that brought the World Trade Organisation (WTO) meeting in Seattle, USA, to a standstill earlier this year.

WTO is requiring countries that wish to trade under its rules to pass and recognise standard intellectual property rights and patent laws. Meanwhile, the open-ended working group on Article 8(j) of the Convention is grappling with an entirely different concept: that traditional knowledge of biodiverse resources is held by communities, not by individuals, and thus cannot become the sole property of an individual, to be patented, bought and sold. When access to traditional knowledge of biodiversity is granted to commercial enterprises, the CBD Access and Benefit Sharing working group is seeking ways to assure that the benefits are equitably shared with the communities that have stewarded that biodiversity. Right now, the world economy provides no such assurances.

Who will win, David of the Biodiversity Convention or the Goliath of globalisation? COP5 saw the articulation of a divided allegiance of countries seeking to both protect their peoples' knowledge and to participate in the world economy. For example, India has signed the WTO accord, and thus has a conventional patent law in place. However, India has also tried to database its peoples' indigenous knowledge and send this to every patent office in the world, to verify that this is knowledge traditionally held and not a patentable innovation.

The working groups dealing with both Traditional Knowledge and Access and Benefit Sharing were strengthened and elaborated by this Conference of Parties, to continue the dialogue, as these are not issues resolved overnight. Whether these efforts will lead to legally-binding agreements, like that of Biosafety, or international guiding principles, or merely more documents and speeches, remains to be seen.

### Focusing on Drylands

At COP5 the Convention specifically considered the needs of dryland ecosystems and agricultural biodiversity and came up with a solid list of recommended actions, including considering the important role of water and land tenure systems in dryland ecosystems. The COP agreed on a broad definition of agrobiodiversity that includes ecological services such as nutrient cycling, pest and disease regulation (natural biological control), pollination, wildlife habitats, hydrological cycle (even montane forests that serve as watersheds), carbon sequestration, and climate regulation. Specific actions to conserve dryland and agricultural biodiversity were identified.

### Leaving out Forests

A major omission at this COP, however, was that the CBD declined to pick up much responsibility for conservation of forest biodiversity. Forests have been without a home in much of this international dialogue, as concerted efforts to forge a forest convention have failed, due to suspicion that such a convention might serve to legitimise destructive forest trade practices. A forest forum (United Nations Forest Forum) has just been established that is to be administered by an as-yet-unidentified body of the United Nations headquarters, but this is simply a forum, not a body that can implement initiatives or projects.

The Convention on Biological Diversity, as an umbrella convention touching on many of the key issues in forest management and trade, such as the ecosystem approach and access and benefit sharing, could bring a holistic perspective to forest discussions. But at this COP, only a small technical experts group has been set up to deal with forest biodiversity issues. The broader option, of an open-ended working group, was rejected. One can well ask, where are the NGOs, local communities and indigenous peoples to be taken on board, on this issue which is of great concern to the civil society sector? As forests are to be a special concern at the next Conference of Parties, in 2002, with a complete programme of work then to be adopted, it is unfortunate the Parties have left this to technical experts to draft, and not invoked the larger global community concerned.

### Banking on Tourism

The CBD has given a special focus to tourism as a test case of its sustainable use objective. In this area, it has considerable interaction with the ongoing work on this matter as promoted by the Commission on Sustainable Development. Again, on ostensibly "biodiversity" issue quickly turns into an economic trade issue, as the convention decision states:

"According to WTO, tourism receipts accounted for ... over 8 per cent of total world exports of goods and almost 35 per cent of the total world exports of services in 1997. Given that a high percentage of tourism involves visits to naturally and culturally distinguished sites, generating large amounts of revenue, there are clearly major opportunities for investing in the maintenance and sustainable use of biological resources. At the same time... historical observation indicates that self-regulation of the tourism industry for sustainable use of biological resources has only rarely been successful."

In particular, the genuine sharing of tourism benefits with local communities is an elusive goal. One hopes that the CBD can do more to forge work programmes and mechanisms to realise the potentials and avoid the pitfalls in the tourism sector.

### The Way Forward

What difference does this all make, at the end of the day? While the CBD lacks strong legal definition (except for the new Biosafety Protocol) what it does have is access to funding, through the Global Environment Facility (GEF). This means that countries, and civil society groups, can propose projects to the GEF that realise the aims of the work programmes so defined in these Conferences of Parties, and possibly receive funds to implement these projects. Moreover, countries that have signed the CBD are required to develop National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, implementing the multiple promises made in the articles of the convention. It will remain the task of civil society, within countries, to demand that these plans are well developed and see the light of day, not lost in competing demands to hook up with a steamrolling world economy that cares little for sea turtles and pastoralist livelihoods. NGOs at the CBD COP5 concluded their summary statement to the conference by pledging to apply their talents responsibly to fulfill the noble objectives and aims so as to empower this admittedly small, but extremely important convention. People and groups wishing to continue to track the various issues of the CBD may contact ELCI, who will continue to co-ordinate NGO communications around the CBD.

Barbara Gemmill

Executive Director, Environment Liaison Centre International, Box 72461, Nairobi. Tel: 562022 Fax: 562175  
Email: [barbarag@elciafrica.org](mailto:barbarag@elciafrica.org)

More information for those with Internet access:

Global Environment Facility: [www.gefweb.org](http://www.gefweb.org)

Full text of the Convention: <http://www.biodiv.org/chm/conv/default.html>

Simplified: <http://nairobi.iicipe.org/elci/CBDsimplified.pdf>

More information: <http://www.undp.org/bpsp>

Daily newsletter, COP5: <http://www.ukabc.org/cop5.html>

## REGULAR ACTIVITIES

### POT LUCK OUTINGS

Bird-watching outings held on every third Sunday of the month, i.e. 20 August. 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. 28 August from 9:30 a.m. Meet at the FONA offices beside the Girl Guides HQ.

### 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.

### ARABUKO SOKOKE (COAST)

The Saturday birdwatch with the Arabuko Sokoke Forest Guides Association is on the first Saturday of each month i.e. 5 August, at 6:30 a.m. from the Visitor Centre, Gede. Cost 100/- per person.

### 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.

### AUGUST DIARY

Wed 2	Birdwalk
Sat 6	AS Birdwalk
Wed 9	Birdwalk
Mon 14	Video
Wed 16	Birdwalk
Sun 20	Pot Luck Outing
Wed 23	Birdwalk
Wed 26	Field trip to Kitengela
Fri 25 - Sun 27	Trip to L'ol Dacha
Mon 31	Tree Walk

## COMMITTEES AND PROJECTS

### IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS PROGRAMME

#### NEEDED URGENTLY FIELD FACILITATOR KAKAMEGA PROJECT

Do you have at least a first degree in a science-based field, preferably environmental studies?

Do you have an understanding of rural economics and the local cultural context?

Are you computer literate with good report writing and verbal communication skills?

Are you able and willing to work long hours in the field when required?

Are you able to work with a multidisciplinary team?

Do you have good conflict resolution skills?

Are you energetic, enthusiastic, adaptable, outgoing, patient, and a good listener?

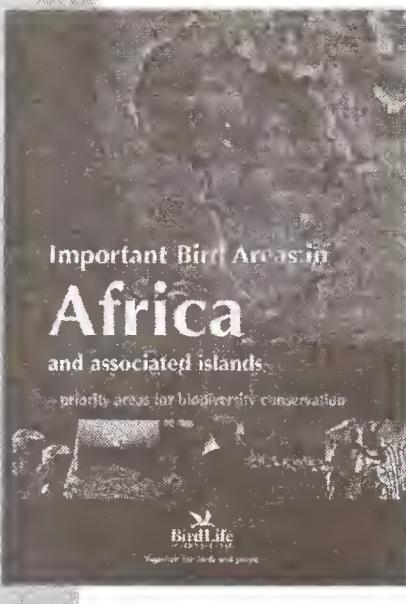
Do you have a clear and demonstrable commitment to conservation?

Do you have some basic accounting/book-keeping skills?

How about your knowledge of birds, bird conservation, eco-tourism?

Do you have the ability to speak any of the Luhya dialects?

You are likely to be the person we are looking for! Please drop you CV and application to the Advocacy and Networking Manager, at Nature Kenya.



## Friends of Nairobi Arboretum (FONA)

### COMPOST MAKING COURSE

Monday 11 September '00

This course is for gardeners, and illustrates how they can turn waste from the kitchen or garden into useful compost manure.

To book call Daniel Kathurima at the Nature Kenya office. Charges 250/- per person. Gardeners meet at the Arboretum main gate at 9:00 a.m. and finish at 12.30 p.m.

### Bird Hotline

#### Rufous-tailed Weavers, 8 Spur-winged Plover

Lookout Hill, Masai Mara/Jul  
Ninian Lewis & Dave Richards

#### Pair of Chestnut Weavers

Langata/Jul  
Sophie Walker

#### Pale Wren Warbler, Tabora (Long-tailed) Cisticola,

Bare-faced Go Away Bird  
Kacheche Camp, Masai Mara/July  
Elly Gathungu

#### Secretary Bird

3000m up eastern Mt. Kenya/Jul  
Bernard Agwanda

#### African Black Duck, Green-headed Sunbird, Thick-billed Seedeater

Nara Maru River Lodge/Jul  
Shailesh Patel

#### Narina's Trogan

Nairobi Arboretum/Jul  
Wednesday Morning Birdwalk

#### White faced Whistling Ducks,

Denham's Bustard  
Mara Triangle/Jun  
Japheth Mwok