

nature net

The Nature Kenya Newsletter www.naturekenya.org

June 2001

EXCURSIONS

Plant Outing to
KEREITA FOREST
Saturday 9 June '01



Outing to Kereita Forest, also popularly known as Gotomaiyu Forest. It is an Important Bird Areas site in the vicinity of Kimende on the Nairobi - Naivasha road.

Kijabe Environment Volunteers working at Kereita will provide guidance. Please carry snacks and worm clothing, which may be necessary. Meet at the National Museum car park at 8:30 a.m.

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WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY



City Park

Saturday 2 June '01
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

With Kashoto Youth Club

If you can help out at the Friends of City Park desk, please call the office

TALKS & VIDEOS

ENDANGERED BIRD SPECIES IN NEW ZEALAND: prospects for improved conservation management

Dr Ken Hughey, Lincoln University,
New Zealand
An Ornithology Department Research Seminar, All welcome

Wednesday 30 May '01, 2:30 p.m.
National Museums of Kenya, Nairobi
Natural Sciences Building,
Seminar Room

*

The Incredible Life of the Termite
by Dr. Gideon Nyamasyo

The ecology and behaviour of the termite



Monday 11 June '01, 5:30 p.m.
National Museums of Kenya,
FORD HALL
Refreshments prior & Town drop off

*

Succulenta garden meeting - FULL DAY INCLUDING TALK ON CEROPEGIAS BY SIRO MASINDE

Siro Masinde has spent many years cultivating and studying Ceropegia taxonomy and has described several new species in Kenya. Bring your own picnic.

Sunday 8 July '01, 11:00 a.m.
No. 57 Koitobus Road, Langata

MEMBERS LUNCH

Topic:
An Eco-production assessment model with Deborah Nightingale

This model is a tool for assessing and managing clusters of small enterprises that use a limited natural resource base. Your comments will be useful as the model is still in development and requires interdisciplinary input.

Join this informal discussion group on **Wednesday 27 June '01, 1:00 p.m.** Natural Sciences Building, Seminar room next to Bustani Cafeteria, National Museums of Kenya, Nairobi
Lunch 100/-

Compost Making and Basic Gardening Course
Monday 18 June '01

Organised by *Friends of Nairobi Arboretum*
and conducted by *Posy Designs*.

Learn to turn kitchen, lawn and garden waste into useful compost manure and get basic hands-on training on garden techniques. For the practical sessions, you will need to bring a pair of hand gloves, hand shears and secateurs.

Only bookings done, with the Nature Kenya office, in advance, will be accepted. Meet at the Arboretum main gate at 9:00 a.m. The course will end at 4:00 p.m.

Cost per person: 600/-
All proceeds are used to support the maintenance of the Arboretum

Action for Biodiversity Conservation

NATURE KENYA, P. O. Box 44486, 00100 Nairobi. Tel: 749957 / 746090 Fax: 741049 E-mail: eanhs@africoonline.co.ke

NATURALIST CORNER

THE COLOBUS WHO CRIED WOLF

BY DINO MARTINS

Animals have developed a wide variety of ways of signalling danger, displeasure, excitement or warnings. Messages are often passed between members of the same species by means of gestures, vocalisations, flashes of colour, release of chemicals etc. In some groups, such as primates, these signals have been developed and refined into a complex series of recognisable, repetitive and conforming, yet flexible sounds and gestures. If we applied the same observations to our own species, primate communication may even be called "language".

On a recent trip to Mt. Elgon, I was privileged to observe the antics of a troop of black and white colobus monkeys (*Colobus guereza*), over a couple of days. The high forest is made up largely of Podo (*Podocarpus falcatus*) and African Pencil Cedar (*Juniperus procera*) and this troop, with occasional graceful leaps, spent a major portion of their time foraging in the large trees. For the most part, the colobus troop forages undisturbed, but they are not without predators.

In the tall trees the colobus are vulnerable to attack, from above, by martial eagles. When a member of the troop spots an eagle, a distinctive call is given. The troop responds by seeking shelter in dense, low thickets where the eagle cannot reach them. On the other hand, when the colobus are foraging on or close to the ground, they are vulnerable to attack by leopards. Should a leopard be spotted, another distinct call will be given. This signals the troop to flee up to the uppermost, slender branches where the spotted feline can never reach them.

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BirdLife
**World
bird
festIVAL**
**WORLD
BIRDWATCH**
6-7 October 2001

On the first weekend of October, hundreds of thousands of people worldwide will take part in the fifth WORLD BIRDWATCH.

World Birdwatch provides a number of opportunities:

- World Birdwatch is fun. It allows birders the opportunity to travel and compete against each other in teams. Thousands of Kenyans have participated with great enthusiasm in the previous events of '93, '95, '97 and '99. Each year Kenya has recorded the highest number of bird species observed within any country over the World Birdwatch weekend.

- World Birdwatch provides not only the fun of birdwatching, but also puts the focus on the environment and provides the opportunity to raise environmental and conservation awareness. On the Saturday of the World Birdwatch weekend activities are organised for the public in Nairobi and Mombasa. These include birdwalks, talks, videos, bird displays, competitions and book sales. In Nairobi these activities are held at the National Museums of Kenya.

- World Birdwatch also provides the opportunity to raise some funds for Nature Kenya programmes. Funds raised previously have gone to research on particular bird species and towards production of an Introductory Bird Guide to be distributed to schools across the country. Funds raised from pledges at this World Birdwatch will go towards producing a fundraising brochure for the Nature Kenya environmental education programme.

How the birdwatch is organised

There is a bird atlas for Kenya which is used as a means of demonstrating the distribution of bird species. On this map the country is divided into 66 squares of one degree each.

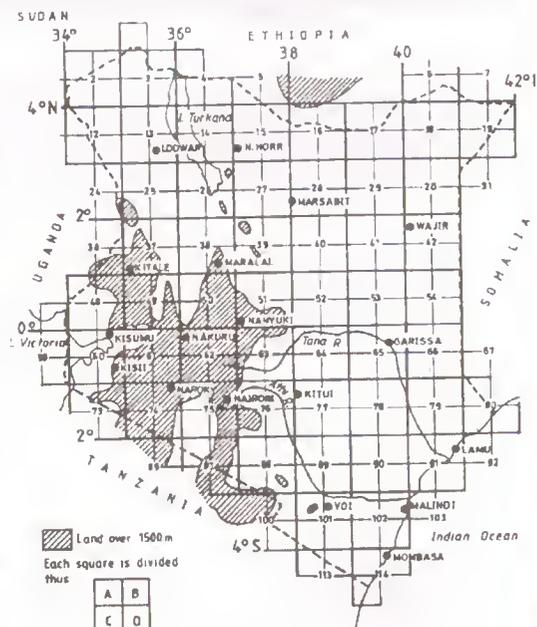
To increase the competitiveness and to make it fairer for teams wherever they are based countrywide, World Birdwatch '01 will be based on the percentage of birds found in any particular atlas square.

For example if there are only 250 possible bird species found in square 17B and the team here records 90% of these, they would have done better than a team in square 75B, which may have 500 possible bird species but they only record 70% of these.

The World Birdwatch committee is finalising the logistical arrangements, but needs your support: If you know of someone who can give accommodation or transport in any part of the country please let us know.

We also need more volunteers to help with specific tasks.

More details in the next newsletter.



REGULAR ACTIVITIES

Sunday Birdwatch (Pot-Luck Outing)

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

TREE WALK

Guided Tree Walks in the Arboretum on the last Monday of every month i.e. 25 June from 9:30 a.m. Meet at the FONA offices beside the Girl Guides HQ. Those who are not members of FONA 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 June, 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 June, at 4:30 p.m. from Ratna Square, Nyali

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.

JUNE DIARY

Sat 2	ASF Birdwalks & World Environment Day at City Park
Sat 9	Plant Outing
Mon 11	Talk on Termites
Sat 16	FFJ Birdwalk
Sun 17	Pot Luck Outing
Fri 22 - Sun 24	Kitengela Camping
Mon 25	Tree Walk
Wed 27	Members Lunch
Birdwalks every Wednesday Morning	

Bird Hotline

Please note the records below are unconfirmed

Bush Pipit, Endashant Swamp/ May
Southern Red Bishop,
Near Nguruman/ Apr

Shailesh Patel, Bernard Chege,
Bernd de Bruijn

Black Bishop Nguruman Town/ Apr
Shailesh Patel, Bernard Chege, Bernd de
Bruijn, George Eshiamwata

Blue Quail, African Crane, Corncrake,
Lesser Grey Shrike
Mara Serena/ May
Japheth Mwok

Goliath Heron, Shelley's Francolin, Short-
tailed Lark, Siffling Gisticola
Nairobi National Park/ May
Peter & Lisa Gaede, Shailesh Patel,
Bernd de Bruijn

Crested Bustard, White-bellied Bustard,
Corncrake, Goliath Heron, Black-bellied
Bustard, Pygmy Falcon, Black-cheeked
Waxbill, Black-chested Snake Eagle Mpala
Ranch & Mpala Research Centre,
Laikipia/ Apr

Nicodemus Nalinya, Patrick Gichuki, Steve
& Natalia Emlen, Stephen Wamiti

Levaillant's Cuckoo
Green Park, Naivasha/ March
Patrick Plumbe

Please send details to
Kenya Birds, c/o Nature Kenya
or kbirds@ofricaonline.co.ke

Remember to renew your membership!

We need your support!
Recruit **one** other member!



Madagascar Pratincole

CLASSIFIEDS

GENET SAMPLES NEEDED

My name is Carlos A. R. Fernandes and I am doing the PhD at the School of Biosciences of Cardiff University, United Kingdom, under supervision of Dr. Michael Bruford
(<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/biosi/research/biodiversity/staff/mb.html>)

and Dr. Stephan Funk
(http://www.londonzoo.co.uk/ioz/ar_0011217.html).

My PhD is about the phylogeny/phylogeography of cryptic species complexes within the genus *Genetta*, namely *Genetta genetta* and *Genetta rubiginosa/tigrina*

(<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/biosi/research/biodiversity/staff/carlos.html>)

For this purpose I'm performing DNA analysis, particularly sequencing certain regions of mitochondrial DNA, and as such I am trying to gather the greatest possible number of genet samples (e.g. skin of museum specimens, preserved tissue, blood, hair, etc.) that I can.

The purpose of this message is to know if someone could, eventually, help me in my quest for genet samples/specimens (e.g. coming from road killings or from some trapping programme) from Kenya and/or neighbouring countries.

INTERNATIONAL ORNITHOLOGICAL CONGRESS

The 23rd International Ornithological Congress will be held in Beijing, on August 11 - 17, 2002.

The first circular, Call for Contributed Papers, and a sample of an abstract submission form is available online, at www.ioc.org.cn.

Enquiries can be sent to Liu Feng, IOC 2002 Secretariat, email infocenter@ioc.org.cn

Editor, Catherine Ngarachu

VOLUNTEER DATABASE

The Nature Kenya Youth Committee is taking the lead in setting up a database, which will provide a ready contact list of volunteers. These are members who are looking to put their skills and time to use in biodiversity conservation related projects, field, administration or other work, for purposes which may range from career advancement to simple enjoyment.

We hope that once the database is set up, it will become a useful resource to Nature Kenya, other environmental organisations, scientists, projects and individuals, who have programmes which would welcome and benefit from volunteer help.

If you would like your name and details to appear on the database, please fill out the attached form and send it in to the Secretary, Youth Committee at the office.

Youth Camping trip to Navaisha

Saturday 30 June - Sunday 1 July '01

Over this weekend we shall visit Lake Naivasha, the Hells Gate National Park and a flower farm. There will also be a talk on the Lammergeier Project.

This is a do it yourself trip where you will need to bring everything you think you will need, such as your own drinking water, food and camping gear. (Tents and mattresses will be available)

Meet at the National Museums car park on Saturday at 7:00 a.m.

Cost: Kshs 1100/- per person for accommodation, transport (by matatu), and park entrance fees

Excursions continued from page 1

WEEKEND GETAWAYS

Camping at Kitengela, on the Hopcraft Farm, Saturday 23 to Sunday 24 June '01



Photo by Solomon Ngari

Please note the dates and cost have changed!

A hiking and birdwatching weekend, near Nairobi.

The campsite facilities include a covered dining area with table and chairs, hot showers and pit latrines.

This is a do it yourself trip where you will need to bring everything you think you will need, such as your own drinking water, food and camping gear.

Meet at the National Museums car park on Saturday at 8:00 a.m./ depart Kitengela at 3:30 p.m. on the Sunday.

Cost: 1100/- per person

Book by 15 June '01 and please let us know if you can give lifts.

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Walking through one of the high glades, I watched the troop resting in the gnarled boughs of a breathtakingly tall African Pencil Cedar. The large male was alert, even wary. At first I thought my presence was causing him distress. However, a glance at the trees below, reveals a large, lone male colobus approaching the troop. The resident male watches him closely, grunting softly. The interloper continues his advance. The resident male then proceeds to give the shrieking alarm call for "leopard" - and the entire troop flees into the highest branches. The intruding male, standing in the open glade, also panics and flees back down into the forest. I look around, my heart racing - but there is no leopard. Then I realise what has happened - the resident male has faked the leopard alarm to trick the interloper into fleeing. This means that his dominance and the security of the troop are maintained without a face to face confrontation.

As the remarkable cunning intelligence behind the trick played on the interloper dawned on me, I am filled with a new respect for the Colobus monkeys, and the psyche of animals in general. Humans, it seems, are not the only ones, who can cry wolf (and get away with it!).



Sample of poster of
birds, insects,
mammals from
around the world
for Sale at the
Nature Kenya
Front Office
© 700/-