



Members of Arabuko-Sokoke Forest Adjacent Dwellers plant mangrove seedlings at Kwa Ibrahim in Kilifi County. PHOTO: CHARO NGAMBAO

Living with the new normal

We are forced to adopt and adapt to a new normal. Covid-19 cases are surging. The world feels like a war zone with an invisible enemy. Like others, Nature Kenya is adapting. We encourage staff and members to follow health guidelines and hope you stay safe and well.

We continue with conservation work, including advocacy at the national and county level and working with communities to protect sites and species and sustain livelihoods. Some activities remain postponed, and some may be postponed further; others that had been postponed may be possible within new approaches, as follows:

1. The 110th Annual General Meeting will take place virtually by zoom on 19th August 2020 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. See separate announcement and link to the meeting.
2. Members will receive an electronic version of the 2020 issue of the Kenya Birding magazine.
3. Members will receive an electronic version of the Nature Net until further notice
4. The Membership office and shop is closed until further notice. Membership recruitment and renewal however continues. Visit <http://naturekenya.org/support/membership/> and use cashless payment options such as M-Pesa (see details on page 4) or credit/debit cards. Your membership cards will be processed and mailed to you.
5. As long as the main office remains open part of the time, members may also buy Arabuko-Sokoke honey. Pay by M-pesa (Pay bill 100300, account "Honey") and arrange a time to collect the honey. Ring the bell at the entrance of the office behind the galleries.
6. Some museums and sites are expected to re-open soon. All visitors will observe new

access protocols including sanitising and wearing masks.

7. The Wednesday Morning Birdwalks have been postponed until further notice.
8. Sunday bird walks and other field trips and talks remain suspended until further notice.
9. The 'Lungs for Kenya' Charity Golf Tournament 2020, re-scheduled for Friday, October 2nd, 2020 at the Karen Country Club, may be moved to March 2021.

Staff continue to optionally work from home. Support staff are on paid leave. On site conservation actions by field staff and Site Support Groups (SSGs) across 26 sites has continued despite the Covid-19 disruptions:

SAVING SPECIES

Human-wildlife conflicts in the Maasai Mara and Kajiado landscapes has continued to lead to wildlife poisoning, causing deaths of vultures as non-target species. Four vulture liaison officers supported by 65 community vulture volunteers in Narok and Kajiado counties continued local awareness raising to stop wildlife poisoning. To reduce wildlife attacks on livestock, Nature Kenya is working with partners in Mara and Kajiado to construct wildlife proof 'bomas' to reduce livestock predation at night.

SITE ACTIONS

Threats on sites increased during this Covid-19 period. Site Support Groups (SSGs) have continued to utilize the Covid-19 emergency response support provided from the Society financial reserves. In partnership with Kenya

Contd. next page

VIRTUAL 110TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE EAST AFRICA NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

DATE: Wednesday 19th August 2020

TIME: 10:00 AM - Noon

VIA: Zoom virtual meeting

The AGM was originally scheduled for May 6th 2020, but postponed in view of the coronavirus situation. To ensure that we have an AGM, we have now shifted to a virtual meeting. We invite you, as a member, to attend the virtual AGM that will be run using Zoom. We look forward to "meeting" you there!

The Agenda

1. Minutes of the 109th Annual General Meeting
2. Matters arising from the Minutes
3. Chairman's Report
4. Honorary Treasurer's Report
5. Appointment of Auditor
6. Any other business of which due notice has been given
7. Election of Office Bearers, Members of the Executive Committee and Trustees.

To register for the virtual AGM in advance, please click [here](#).

The AGM documents will be ready for viewing in August for those who register.

How to access the virtual AGM

You will receive the virtual AGM (Zoom) link in your registration confirmation email.

What you need on your computer or device to attend the virtual AGM

Zoom application

- [Download and install](#) the Zoom application appropriate for your device.

System requirements

You may join the meeting from your PC, Mac, Linux or mobile devices (IOS or Android). Click [here](#) to learn about:

- Supported operating systems, tablets and mobile devices
- Supported browsers
- Required device processor and RAM

Internet connectivity

- Join a Zoom test meeting to test your Internet connectivity.
- Check here for recommended Internet bandwidth.

Sound

- You will need speakers or headphones to listen to the speaker. Check that your headphones or speakers are connected and the volume is turned on (where applicable).
- You may also need to check the Audio Settings on Zoom once you have logged in.

ACTION

Contd. from page 1

Forest Research Institute (KEFRI) and Kenya Forest Service (KFS), Participatory Forest Management Regulations were drafted and approved by the Ministry of Environment. Public consultations on these regulations is hampered by Covid-19 directives.

To increase support for the 1,310 acres of land purchased by Nature Kenya in Dakatcha Woodland as a nature reserve, a baseline socio-economic survey is being done in partnership with KEFRI. This will make it possible to target investment for climate related community interventions supported by donor programmes.

A letter of agreement has been signed between Nature Kenya and NEMA to facilitate the implementation of a new project in Sabaki River estuary.

RESTORATION

In July 2020, the Ontulili Community Forest Association (CFA) in Mt Kenya planted 30,000 indigenous trees in Ontulili forest block. This tree planting is supported by Safaricom. Staff and CFAs developed tree growing business plans and engaged in field monitoring for 35,200 trees planted in Aberdares (Wanjerere, Kimakia, and Gatare and Kieni forest blocks) in year 2020. Mt.Kebio Site Support Group (SSG) undertook spot weeding and of 12 hectares of previously planted forest area. In Yala Swamp, 16,750 tree seedlings were planted, bringing the total seedlings planted in Yala this planting season to 60,202.



On-going Papyrus restoration in the Yala Ecosystem. So far 5,010 papyrus stems have been planted. PHOTO: SIKHEMBO KHADIANGU

Partnerships for forest restoration have continued with key partners including Kenya Breweries and Safaricom. Nature Kenya has joined (as BirdLife Kenya) the Trillion Trees Partners (BirdLife, World Wide Fund for Nature and Wildlife Conservation Society). Joel Siele and Paul Gacheru received training on BirdLife Forest Landscape Sustainability Accelerator.

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

Nature Kenya has continued to hold government authorities to account for sustainable development in Kenya. Comments were provided on the draft National Forest Policy to ensure forest cover is increased with the involvement of all stakeholders. Nature Kenya attended a stakeholders meeting convened by the Ministry of Water and Sanitation to drum up support for the Malewa dam that threatens Lake Naivasha, and joined other stakeholders to object to plans to build this dam. Nature Kenya also urged the Ministry of Tourism to move the proposed Lake Naivasha waterfront project from the shores of Lake Naivasha to the escarpment overlooking the lake. And Nature Kenya provided comments on the proposed variation of Ndaragwa forest boundary and aerial fumigation of birds in Mwea.



A public consultative meeting for the Kibaoni Community Conservation Area (CCA) in Dakatcha Woodland, Kilifi. PHOTO: EDWIN UTUMBI

The Climate Change Directorate of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Ministry of Agriculture and other national stakeholders and Murang'a, Meru, Kirinyaga, Embu and Nyeri Counties are engaged in discussions on mainstreaming climate smart agriculture and ecosystem based adaptation into the coffee sector.

LOCAL EMPOWERMENT

Site Support Groups (SSGs) at 26 sites are the caretakers of Key Biodiversity Areas. The Dakatcha Woodland Conservation Group was able to thwart charcoal making in a small kaya forest. The 450 butterfly farmers in Arabuko-Sokoke forest, who were supported with seeds in April in response to Covid-19 challenges, are now harvesting their farm produce.

In Tana Delta, 27 people were trained to use an online data collection and storage mobile phone App Epicollect5. The App allows remote real-time access to data for review and analysis. So far data collected includes beneficiaries for conservation agriculture (1,570 households (HH)); Agroforestry (70 HH), Galla goat rearing (180 HH), irrigation farming (157 HH) and fishponds (120 HH). The Tana Delta Conservation Network (TDCN) submitted written memoranda to the Tana River County Assembly on budget estimates for the financial year 2020/21.

Nature Kenya local empowerment capacity was sought by the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (GEF-SGP). Nature Kenya is supporting eleven grantees to implement their SGP funded projects. These projects are targeting the conservation and protection of Mijikenda Sacred Kaya forests in Kilifi County. Adaptive training approaches will be applied to overcome Covid-19 challenges on gatherings. These include pre-recorded virtual training materials shared with the target groups.

LIVELIHOODS

In July in Yala, 9 ponds were stocked with fingerlings (6 with tilapia, 3 with catfish); 775 kgs of high value vegetables were produced in conservation and climate smart agriculture; and assorted papyrus products were produced. The YESSG fish and chicken feed milling machine was operationalized with 200 kgs of starter marsh produced and distributed to fish farmers. The chicken rearing unit in Gem Sub-County has become a community model, training and demonstration centre where 25 visiting chicken farmers received hands-on training in poultry production practices. At the fish feed making mill in Usenge, 10 fish farmers were trained through demonstration in fish feed formulation and milling.

Nature Kenya will continue to update you on further developments. Threats remain to species and habitats, and conservation work must go on. Please continue to support Nature Kenya, and to observe and enjoy nature from wherever you are. For any clarification or to report your observations on species and sites, kindly contact us through email: office@naturekenya.org or telephone: 020 3537568, 0780 149200, 0751 624312, 0771 343138.

For updates visit
www.naturekenya.org

EDITORIAL TEAM

Fleur Ng'weno, Gloria Waswa,
John Mwacharo, Esther Wangari
and Serah Munguti

LAYOUT

John Mwacharo

FRONT BANNER

Lorenzo Barelli



For contributions, advertising and subscriptions, contact us by:

Post: P. O. Box 44486 GPO, Nairobi

Telephone: 020 3537568/0780149200/0751624312/ 0771343138

Email: office@naturekenya.org

Printed with support from:



Bird and human mutualism: The Greater Honeyguide and honey-hunters

Greater Honeyguides know where bees' nests are located and like to eat beeswax; humans know how to subdue the bees using fire, and open the nest using axes. By working together, the two species can locate the bee nest, overcome the bees' defences and gain access to the nest, thus providing beeswax for the honeyguides and honey for the humans.

This specialised relationship is a rare example of animal-human cooperation – mutualism – that has evolved through natural selection. Pioneering research was done in Kenya by Dr Hussein Isack in the 1980s, who first demonstrated scientifically how the mutualism functions. Now we have the opportunity to take part in a citizen science study.

Researchers from the University of Cambridge in the UK and the University of Cape Town in South Africa are working in close cooperation with rural honey-hunting communities in Africa to study the foraging partnership between the Greater Honeyguide and the human

honey-hunters whom it guides to bees' nests. They want to understand the ecology, evolution and conservation implications of the honeyguide-human relationship, as a window into the origin and maintenance of mutually beneficial interactions between species (mutualisms).

If you have seen or heard a Greater Honeyguide anywhere in Africa, and whether or not it guided you, please tell them about it! Visit the citizen science project at <Honeyguiding.me> for more information and to submit a sighting.

"The honeyguide-human relationship is currently dwindling throughout Africa, and before it fades away, we need to understand this ancient part of our own species' evolutionary history in those few places where it still thrives. This is relevant to conservation, because mutualisms can have wide reach in shaping ecological communities," reads an excerpt from the Honeyguide Research Project. 🐦

4 Bright Planets

BY FLEUR NG'WENO

Four bright planets light up the skies in August 2020 – some in the evening and others before dawn. Planets do not produce light; they reflect the light from the sun. Since they are much nearer to Earth, however, the nearest planets look brighter than the stars.

Bright Jupiter and golden Saturn are up in the east at sunset; they travel across the sky with the stars, and set in the west before dawn. (It's actually the Earth that rotates towards the east.) The moon is near Jupiter on August 1 and 28 and near Saturn on August 2 and 29.

Mars, glowing brighter and redder each night as its orbit brings it closer to earth, rises late in the evening and is high in the west at dawn. Brilliant Venus is in the east before sunrise. The moon is near Mars on August 8 and 9, and near Venus on August 15.

Meteor shower

Meteors are bright streaks of light formed by rocks and dust from space burning up in the Earth's atmosphere. The Perseids meteor shower runs from mid-July to August 24, and peaks on the night of August 11 to 12. Best viewing from a dark location with few or no clouds, after midnight.

August stars

The constellation of Scorpius, the scorpion, lies across the southern sky. Imagine the reddish star Antares as its fiery eye. A curved line of stars forms the scorpion's tail, like a huge fishhook, with two stars as the sting.

To the west (right) are the bright stars Alpha and Beta Centauri. To the east (left) of the Scorpion's tail, stars form a shape like a teapot, or a basket with handles. The ancient Greeks called this constellation Sagittarius, the Archer.

In the northeast, the bright star Altair is flanked by two smaller stars; Vega, even brighter, is low in the north. The orange star Arcturus is high in the northwest; and the Plough or Big Dipper, with stars forming a long-handled spoon, is low in the northwest.

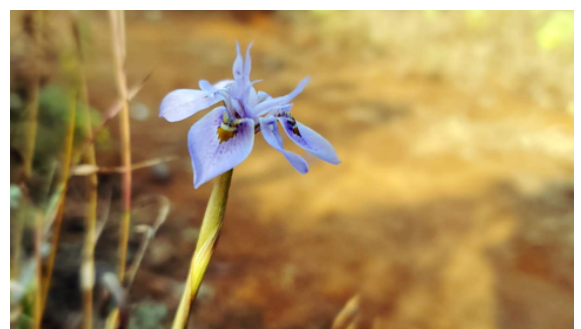
The blue-white star Spica is high in the west. The moon is near Spica on the 23rd, and near Antares on the 26th.

Aug '20 moon

Full moon, Aug 3 and Sept 2. Last quarter (half-lit at dawn), Aug 11. New moon, Aug 19. First quarter (half-lit at sunset), Aug 25. 🌙

Comet NEOWISE Update

Comet NEOWISE is visible from Kenya now, but becoming fainter as it speeds away. You need a dark sky location, a clear view of the northwestern horizon, and a pair of binoculars or a telescope. Half an hour to one hour after sunset, look to the west (left) of the 'handle' of the Plough or Big Dipper. Search with binoculars for a fuzzy, hazy spot of light. It will appear higher each night, and then fade out of our view.



The beautiful *Moraea stricta* flowers open in the afternoon, after the long rains. PHOTO: OLIVIA ROBERTSON

WANTED: HONEYGUIDE SIGHTINGS

Have you seen a Greater Honeyguide?



1. Record its location



2. Adult or juvenile?



JUVENILE



ADULT MALE



ADULT FEMALE

3. Did it guide you?



4. Anything else to add? (optional)



Honeyguide Research Project

SUBMIT YOUR SIGHTING
www.honeyguiding.me



Birding Updates

Wednesday Morning Birdwalks, monthly Sunday Birdwatch and Mombasa birdwalks are still temporarily suspended. Updates in upcoming newsletters. We hope you find opportunities to go birding in green or blue spaces near you, on your own or with local groups. Some birds who nest in Europe and Asia are starting to migrate to Africa. Green and Common sandpipers are already here; Brian Finch suggests others to look for in August:

On inland wetlands, Wood, Marsh and Curlew sandpipers, Common Greenshank, Ruff, Little Stint, Black-tailed Godwit, Caspian and Common Ringed plovers, then Lesser Black-backed and Black-headed gulls and Gull-billed and White-winged Black terns.

On the Coast, Whimbrel, Curlew, Terek Sandpiper, Sanderling, Ruddy Turnstone, Greater Sand Plover, then Heuglin's Gull, Common, Gull-billed and Caspian terns.

Barn Swallows will already be quite common on inland lakes, with Sand Martins arriving soon, and Common Swifts probably already here.

If you go out birding, the Kenya Bird Map project would like to have your records to help document the distribution of Kenya's birds <<http://kenya.birdmap.africa/>> If you have questions, write to <kenyabirdmap@naturekenya.org>

To stay in touch and be updated with the birding scene in Kenya, sign in to the new Kenyabirdsnet platform on Google Groups at:

<https://groups.google.com/d/forum/kenyabirdsnet>

After signing in you will be able to post your records through the following email address:

kenyabirdsnet@googlegroups.com

Some online resources about birds and birding are:

- Ndege Wetu (14-part blog series on the birds of Kenya) <<http://www.shotsbyshema.com/category/ndege-wetu/>>
- Wings Over Kenya Facebook page
- BirdLife International < <http://www.birdlife.org>>
- The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology Bird Academy <<https://academy.allaboutbirds.org>>



SPOTTED: Norbert Rottcher photographed this Golden-rumped Sengi (Elephant-Shrew) in Arabuko-Sokoke Forest in June. In the upper left is a Red-capped Robin Chat, a migrant to the Coast from its breeding grounds in Southern Africa. It's a rare photo of two shy forest creatures. Norbert Rottcher observes that the bird follows the Sengi around and benefits from the latter's foraging activity to flush insects.

JOURNAL OF EAST AFRICAN NATURAL HISTORY

A new issue is now available online at <https://www.bioone.org/journals/journal-of-east-african-natural-history/volume-109/issue-1>

The table of contents for this issue is listed below. Click on the links below to view the abstract for each article, or click on the link above to read the table of contents online.

If you wish to update your preferences or alerts, please sign into your account at <https://bioone.org>

If you need any further help, please visit <https://bioone.org> and click on "help".

The following papers are now available from BioOne (<http://www.bioone.org/toc/eanh/current>) or African Journals Online (<https://www.ajol.info/index.php/jeanh>)

A Checklist of the Spiders of Tanzania

A. Russell-Smith

<https://www.bioone.org/journals/journal-of-east-african-natural-history/volume-109/issue-1/028.109.0101/A-Checklist-of-the-Spiders-of-Tanzania/10.2982/028.109.0101.full>

First Observation of Vervet Monkeys *Chlorocebus pygerythrus* Feeding on Seagrass *Thalassodendron ciliatum* along the Tanzanian Coast

John V. Lyakurwa

<https://www.bioone.org/journals/journal-of-east-african-natural-history/volume-109/issue-1/028.109.0102/First-Observation-of-Vervet-Monkeys-Chlorocebus-pygerythrus-Feeding-on-Seagrass/10.2982/028.109.0102.full>

Yes! Start my NatureKenya membership

Surname _____
First Name _____
Ms/Mr/Title _____
Address _____
Tel. _____
Mobile _____
Email _____

MEMBERSHIP TYPES

<i>Ksh Per Year</i>	
Full	2,000
Sponsor	6,000
Family	2,800
Student	1,200
Schools, Clubs	1,500
Corporates	20,000 -30,000



JOIN/RENEW MEMBERSHIP

- Select 'Lipa na Mpesa'
- Select 'Pay Bill'
- Enter business number **100300**
- Enter account number (**put your lapsed membership number or write new member**)
- Enter the amount, enter your PIN
- Confirm details & press OK

For details on associated groups such as Youth Committee, Succulenta, and Friends of Nairobi Arboretum, City Park or Arabuko-Sokoke Forest, contact office@naturekenya.org