



Beneficiaries of the rice seed in Ozi. PHOTO: GEORGE ODERA

Rice growing boosts forest restoration in the Tana River Delta

Until recently, Ozi was considered a major community grown rice-producing area in the Tana River Delta. Seawater intrusion, however, forced communities to abandon rice growing in the area. At the time, the rice variety cultivated could not survive in brackish waters. Communities sought alternative livelihood activities, some of which were not good for the mangrove forest found in the area.

"The abandonment of rice growing in Ozi hurt the surrounding environment, particularly the mangrove and Ozi forests. Harvesting of mangrove poles was one of the alternative livelihood activities people got involved in. Communities also started clearing vegetation for farming further into the natural forest, and this was not good for the environment," says Serah Munguti, then Policy and Advocacy Manager at Nature Kenya.

Since 2019, Nature Kenya, with support from EU Rebuild/CISP, has embarked on a new initiative aimed at reducing degradation at the Ozi forest and adjacent areas through the revival of rice growing.

Correlation between food insecurity and habitat loss

The aim of this initiative, Serah, points out, was to improve on food security as well as safeguarding the Ozi forest's unique biodiversity.

It all started when Nature Kenya supported 126 households in Ozi village, representing 936 individuals (470 males, 466 females), with 2,571 kg of certified ITA 310 (NIBAM 110) rice seed. This seed variety was recommended for the area by experts from the Ministry of Agriculture.

ITA 310, according to Infonet-Biovision (<https://www.infonet-biovision.org/PlantHealth/Crops/Rice>), is a long-grained rice variety that matures in 110-120 days. This variety is suited for growing in irrigated lowlands and is tolerant to rice blast and the Rice Yellow Mottle Virus (RYMV). ITA 310 is grown for subsistence and commercial use. It has a grain yield of 3-5 tonnes per hectare (t/ha).

Out of the supported households, 91 harvested 867Kg of paddy rice per acre, translating to 79 tonnes of unprocessed rice. The harvested paddy rice, working with a conversion rate of 65%, yielded 51 tonnes of milled rice valued at Ksh 3,076,983 at farm gate and Ksh 3,589,814 at market prices. This translated to an average income of Ksh. 33,813 and Ksh. 39,448 per household at farm gate and market prices respectively. These results of the rice harvest constituted a 33.83% and 61.56% increase in annual household incomes for male and female-headed households respectively at farm gate prices. At

market prices, the annual household incomes increase by 39.53% and 72% for beneficiary male and female-headed households respectively.

Demand for the new seed variety has also increased as more farmers request for it. Nature Kenya, once again, has supplied 4.2 tons of the rice seed to the farmers this year, targeting 247 farmers.

Said Nyara, a rice farmer in Ozi, is upbeat about this initiative. Nyara, who has a three-acre farm, harvested 30 bags of 50kgs last season.

"The rice variety is good. It is resistant to salt and yields a better harvest," says Nyara, adding that it also fetches better prices in the market.

Mwanaharusi Bakari, another rice farmer from Ozi is excited to be growing the rice this year.

"It's my first time growing this rice variety, and I'm happy about it. I saw other farmers having a good harvest last season. This has inspired me," she says.

Mwanaharusi intends to put two out of her three acres under rice cultivation.

Environmentally, the revival of rice growing has somehow also contributed to an increase in mangrove forest cover.

"Boosting household incomes through rice growing is one way of reducing over-reliance on forest products for livelihoods at the Tana River Delta. Nature Kenya is working with different communities spread across the delta to promote sustainable use of natural resources," says Serah.

The Tana River Delta Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) is designated as a wetland of international importance (Ramsar site) and is one of the most important wetlands in Africa. In 2011, Nature Kenya led a collaborative effort of various stakeholders in the development of a Tana River Delta Land Use Plan (LUP) that was guided by a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The process was concluded in 2015. The land-use plan has since been approved and adopted as a policy by the Lamu County government. The land-use plan is now in its implementation phase. Nature Kenya has also been promoting the Indigenous Community Conservation Areas (ICCAs) approach. Community Conservation Areas are biodiversity-rich areas partially or largely managed by local communities. 🐢



NatureKenya
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Virtual Public Lecture

TOPIC
Reptile Medicine and Surgery in Kenya is Evolving: The New Normal

Date: 20th November 2020
Time: 2.00- 3.30 pm.

Zoom Meeting ID: 953 8469 3029
Passcode: 305791

THE LECTURE IS FREE TO ALL NATURE KENYA MEMBERS

Will Covid-19 go away or must we learn to live with it?

The Government's directives to control Covid-19 were relaxed in October, with schools partially re-opening. Meanwhile the number of covid-19 cases and positivity are increasing again. Nature Kenya has been able to deliver more conservation action, including advocacy at the national and county level and working with communities to protect sites and species and sustain livelihoods. However, the risks of catching Covid-19 are still very high. Some activities remain postponed and some may be postponed further as new ones are started:

1. Members will receive an electronic version of the Nature Net until further notice.
2. Wednesday morning birdwalks, Sunday bird walks, field trips and in-person talks remain suspended until further notice. Virtual talks through zoom may be announced by e-mail.
3. The Membership office and shop is closed until further notice. Membership recruitment and renewal continues. Visit <http://naturekenya.org/support/membership/> and use cashless payment options such as M-Pesa or credit/debit cards. Your membership cards will be processed and e-mailed to you for you to print or keep in your phone. Laminated hard copy cards will only be produced on request.
4. Members may also buy Arabuko-Sokoke honey or books. Pay by M-pesa (Pay bill 100300, account "Honey" or "Books"). Collect them on Mondays or arrange another time to collect the honey or books. Ring the bell at the entrance of the office behind the galleries.
5. The 'Lungs for Kenya' Charity Golf Tournament 2020 has been moved to a date in March 2021.
6. As at Nov. 1, Museums and sites are open to the public under Ministry of Health guidelines.

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 clarifications 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

Dr. Paul Matiku,
Executive Director, Nature Kenya – the East Africa Natural History Society



PHOTO: © JONATHAN CARAMANUS / GREEN RENAISSANCE / WWF-UK

Leaders' Pledge for Nature

Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta was among World leaders who signed the Leaders' Pledge on the Environment in September. The leaders have pledged to unite to reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 for sustainable development

We therefore commit to undertake the following urgent actions over the next ten years as part of the UN Decade of Action to achieve Sustainable Development and to put nature and biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030:

1. We will ensure that our response to the current health and economic crisis is green and just and contributes directly to recovering better and achieving sustainable societies; we commit to putting biodiversity, climate and the environment as a whole at the heart both of our COVID-19 recovery strategies and investments and of our pursuit of national and international development and cooperation.
2. We commit to the development and full implementation of an ambitious and transformational post-2020 global biodiversity framework for adoption at the 15th Conference of Parties of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD CoP 15) as a key instrument to reach the Sustainable Development Goals that includes:
 - a. A set of clear and robust goals and targets, underpinned by the best available science, technology, research as well as indigenous and traditional knowledge;
 - b. Commitments to address the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss and halt human induced extinction of species, to ensure species populations recover, and to significantly increase the protection of the planet's land and oceans through representative, well- connected and effectively managed systems of Protected Areas and Other Effective Area- Based Conservation Measures, and to restore a significant share of degraded ecosystems;
 - c. Commitment to the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in decision making and recognition of their rights, as acknowledged in relevant national and international instruments;

*As of 31/10/2020 –

The latest information on the number of endorsements can be found at <https://www.leaderspledgefornature.org/>

For updates visit
www.naturekenya.org

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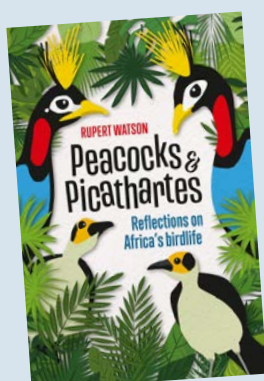
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- d. Commitments backed up by a strong monitoring and review mechanism, and means of implementation commensurate with the challenge of halting and reversing the decline in biodiversity;
 - e. Commitments to strengthen the cooperation among relevant multilateral environmental agreements, international organizations and programmes to contribute to effective and efficient implementation of the biodiversity framework.
3. We will re-double our efforts to end traditional silo thinking and to address the interrelated and interdependent challenges of biodiversity loss, land, freshwater and ocean degradation, deforestation, desertification, pollution and climate change in an integrated and coherent way, ensuring accountability and robust and effective review mechanisms, and lead by example through actions in our own countries.
 4. We commit to transition to sustainable patterns of production and consumption and sustainable food systems that meet people's needs while remaining within planetary boundaries, including by:
 - a. Accelerating the transition to sustainable growth, decoupled from resource use, including through moving towards a resource-efficient, circular economy, promoting behavioral changes and a significant scale-up in nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches on land and at sea;
 - b. Supporting sustainable supply chains, significantly reducing the impact on ecosystems caused by global demand for commodities and encouraging practices that regenerate ecosystems;
 - c. Shifting land use and agricultural policies away from environmentally harmful practices for land and marine ecosystems and promoting sustainable land and forest management to significantly reduce habitat loss, unsustainable land use change, deforestation and fragmentation, achieve land degradation neutrality and maintain genetic diversity;
 - d. Eliminating unsustainable uses of the ocean and its resources, including illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing as well as unsustainable fishing and aquaculture practices, and working collaboratively to develop a coherent global approach to protect the ocean and sustainably use its resources, including by aiming to conclude at the next intergovernmental conference, the negotiations for an effective international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction;
 - e. Significantly enhancing our efforts to reduce the negative impacts of invasive alien species;
 - f. Significantly reducing pollution in the air, on land, in soil, freshwater and the ocean, in particular by eliminating plastic leakage to the ocean by 2050 as well as pollution due to chemicals, excess nutrients and hazardous waste, including through the strengthening of global coordination, cooperation and governance on marine litter and microplastics, with focus on a whole life-cycle approach and supporting an ambitious outcome for the process on the Strategic approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020;
5. We commit to raising ambition and aligning our domestic climate policies with the Paris Agreement, with enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions and long-term strategies consistent with the temperature goals of the Paris Agreement, and the objective of Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by mid-century, strengthening climate resilience in our economies and ecosystems and promoting convergence between climate and biodiversity finance.
 6. We commit to ending environmental crimes which can seriously impact efforts to tackle environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, and climate change, and can undermine security, the rule of law, human rights, public health, and social and economic development. We will ensure effective, proportionate and dissuasive legal frameworks, strengthen national and international law enforcement and foster effective cooperation. This also includes tackling environmental crimes involving organized criminal groups, such as the illicit trafficking of wildlife and timber, as serious crimes, acting along the whole supply chain, reducing the demand for illegal wildlife, timber and by-products, and engaging with local communities to ensure sustainable solutions for people, nature and the economy.
 7. We commit to mainstreaming biodiversity into relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral policies at all levels, including in key sectors such as food production, agriculture, fisheries and forestry, energy, tourism, infrastructure and extractive industries, trade and supply chains, and into those key international agreements and processes which hold levers for change, including the G7, G20, WTO, WHO, FAO, and UNFCCC and UNCCD. We will do this by ensuring that across the whole of government, policies, decisions and investments account for the value of nature and biodiversity, promote biodiversity conservation, restoration, sustainable use and the access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization.
 8. We commit to integrating a "One-Health" approach in all relevant policies and decision-making processes at all levels that addresses health and environmental sustainability in an integrated fashion.

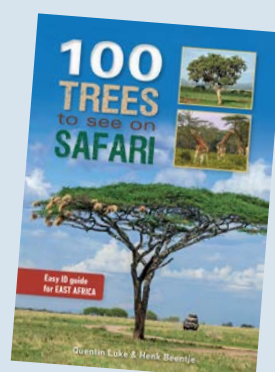
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NEW ITEMS AVAILABLE at the NK Online Shop <http://naturekenya.org/shop/>



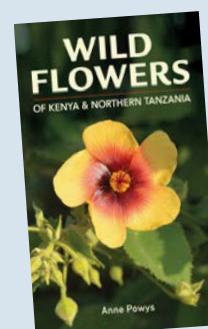
Peacocks & Picathartes is a celebration of the diversity of African birds, focusing on families that occur only in Africa as well as iconic families and species that, despite having close relatives in other parts of the world, seem to embody something of Africa.

KSH. 1,700



This book showcases 100 of Africa's most visible and significant trees, arranged by the habitats in which they occur.

KSH. 1,700



A compact guide featuring nearly 400 wild flowers of Kenya and northern Tanzania, grouped for ease of use according to colour. The book includes the most widespread and commonly encountered species as well as some unusual flowers found in more remote areas.

KSH. 1,700



Reusable Nature Kenya branded fabric face masks available in white and black

KSH. 100

ACTION

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9. We will strengthen all financial and non-financial means of implementation, to transform and reform our economic and financial sectors and to achieve the wellbeing of people and safeguard the planet by, inter alia:
 - a. Incentivizing the financial system, nationally and internationally, including banks, funds, corporations, investors and financial mechanisms, to align financial flows to environmental commitments and the Sustainable Development Goals, to take into account the value of nature and biodiversity, promote biodiversity conservation, restoration and its sustainable use in their investment and financing decisions, and in their risk management, as well as including through encouraging the use of taxonomies;
 - b. Enhancing the mobilization of resources from all sources, public and private, maximizing the effectiveness and efficiency of the use of existing resources and facilitating access to support where needed, in order to significantly scale up support for biodiversity, including through nature-based solutions, which contribute effectively not only to the achievement of biodiversity and climate goals, but to sustainable development, livelihoods and poverty alleviation where needed;
 - c. Eliminating or repurposing subsidies and other incentives that are harmful to nature, biodiversity and climate while increasing significantly the incentives with positive or neutral impact for biodiversity across all productive sectors;
 - d. Improving the efficiency, transparency and accountability in the use of existing resources, including through co-benefits, finance tracking and reporting frameworks.
10. We commit that our approach to the design and implementation of policy will be science-based, will recognize the crucial role of traditional and indigenous knowledge as well as science and research in the fight against ecosystem degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change; and will engage the whole of society, including business and financial sectors, indigenous peoples and local communities, environmental human rights defenders, local governments and authorities, faith-based groups, women, youth, civil society groups, academia, and other stakeholders.

In endorsing this Pledge for Nature, we commit ourselves not simply to words, but to meaningful action and mutual accountability to address the planetary emergency. It marks a turning point, and comes with an explicit recognition that we will be judged now and by future generations on our willingness and ability to meet its aims. With this Pledge, we also aim to support the United Nations system and its fundamental role in catalysing the global response to this crisis in the upcoming decisive months and years.

We will join forces in the run up to the key international events and processes taking place throughout 2021, including the G7, the G20, the IUCN World Conservation Congress, the fifth UN Environment Assembly, UNFCCC COP26 and the UN Ocean Conference, aiming to achieve ambitious and realistic outcomes to pave the way for a strong Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, and we urge all stakeholders to join us in making commitments to address the planetary emergency on the road to CBD CoP 15 and beyond.

We commit to meeting again next year, and beyond, at such key international events, in particular at the next UN General Assembly High Level Week in September 2021, to review our progress and reaffirm these commitments. 🐾

[Click here](#) to read the full pledge

Naturalist

Focus on Jupiter and Saturn

BY FLEUR NG'WENO

Planets Nov '20

All year the planets Jupiter and Saturn have followed each other across the sky. Now their orbits seem to bring them closer and closer, reaching a great conjunction next month, December 21. Look high in the southwest after sunset to see big bright Jupiter and golden Saturn – visible even from the city.

Across the sky, in the east, Mars glows bright and red. The waxing moon will be near Jupiter and Saturn on November 19 and near Mars on the 25th.

In the morning sky, brilliant Venus is high over the sunrise before dawn. The bright star Spica appears close to Venus in mid-November. Little Mercury is also in the predawn sky most of the month. The waning crescent moon is near Venus on November 13, near Mercury on the 14th.

November stars

High overhead, four stars form the corners of the Great Square of Pegasus, the flying horse of the ancient Greeks. Low in the northeast, the constellation Cassiopeia is a group of bright stars in the shape of a letter "M". If you missed it in October, look for a hazy, blurry spot of light between these two constellations. This is the great Andromeda galaxy.

In the south, the bright

star Fomalhaut is high, and the bright star Achernar below it. On a clear, dark night, you can look for the Small and Large Magellanic Clouds below Achernar. These cloud-like areas are small galaxies, composed of millions of stars.

The Pleiades or Seven Sisters – a cluster of bright stars close together – are rising in the east. Below the Pleiades, a group of stars form a cone-like shape, the Hyades cluster, in the constellation of Taurus the Bull. The bright, reddish star Aldebaran is at one end of the cone.

Moon Nov '20

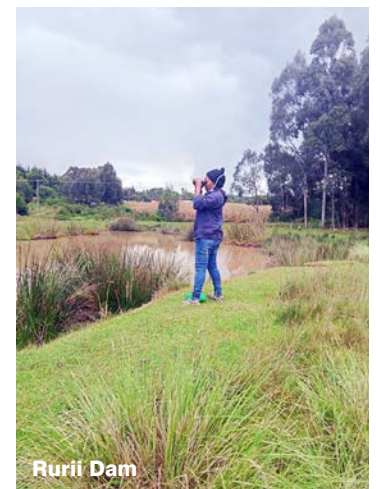
Nov 8 – last ¼ (half-lit moon at dawn). Nov 15 – new moon. Nov 22 – first ¼ (half-lit moon at sunset). Nov 30 – full moon. The Hindu festival of lights, Diwali, is celebrated in mid-November this year.

Leonids Meteor Shower

In its orbit around the sun, the Earth regularly passes through areas of dust and debris. When a bit of dust or rock falls into the Earth's atmosphere, it burns up, creating a bright light. This is called a meteor or "shooting star" or in parts of Kenya, "burning spear". The Leonids Meteor shower lasts from November 6 to 30, with the peak before dawn on November 17. You need a clear, dark sky, away from city lights, to see most meteors. 🐾

Sights of the Global Big Birding Day

Volunteers, young and old, from across the country turned out to participate in the Global Big Birding Day on October 17 (full story on next page).



Birding Updates

Global Big Birding Day

The eBird October Big Day in Kenya has been a big success. Kenya has placed 6th globally with a total of 816 species reported on the day, from 258 checklists submitted. We were beaten by five South American countries, four of which posted day totals of more than 1000 species. To give you all an idea of the capacity of citizen science to monitor bird populations, some 7097 species were reported across the globe on the 17th October, from more than 78,000 (!!!!) checklists submitted. More information on Kenya's effort, including a full species list for the day, can be found at the link below.

https://ebird.org/region/KE?yr=BIGDAY_2020b&rank=lrec



Global Big Day birders at the Museum grounds, Nairobi.
PHOTO: JOHN MWACHARO

A big thank you to all those who submitted lists for this event, thus highlighting the incredible birdlife on offer in Kenya. Outstanding efforts include:

Site high list - Ole Sanoe Henry (205 species - Soysambu)

Coastal birders - almost a cleanup; a very good contribution

Most remote list - Sibiloi NP and Ileret (Ambrose Ajiko)

Thanks to Pete Steward for pulling everyone together and to the eBird review team (including James Bradley, Stratton Hatfield and Tyler Davis) for going through and checking the data.

Birders, make sure to sign up for the next eBird big day in May 2021!

Meanwhile, enjoy the Global Bird Weekend and Global Big Day video by Washington Wachira

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g31BSrqDOrE>

Mombasa Birdwalks are held the 3rd Saturday of each month. To check meeting time and place, please contact:

Taibali Hamzali <thamzali@gmail.com> / 0733-980540;

or Doris Schaule <dorischaule@gmail.com> / 0722-277752

or Facebook page: <<https://www.facebook.com/groups/FFJmombasa/>>

Wednesday Morning Birdwalks and other Nature Kenya field trips are still postponed, probably until 2021. Bird-watching is safe - we encourage you to go out birding with friends in your local area and send your records to:

Kenya Bird Map <<http://kenya.birdmap.africa/>>

If you have questions re KBM, write to <kenyabirdmap@naturekenya.org>

Online birding:

To learn more about Kenyan birds and enjoy virtual birding tours, take a look at the new YouTube channel "The Safari Naturalist":

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCajjLtyL9G6mJ20Aajw1RLxXa>

- More stories from virtual birding tours are shared under "The Safari Naturalist" blog website: <https://www.thesafarinaturalist.com/virtual-birding-tours/>
- 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>>

To stay 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>

Yes! Start my NatureKenya membership

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MEMBERSHIP TYPES

| Ksh Per Year | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 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'
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- 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