



nature net

A newsletter of Nature Kenya-The EANHS

September 2023



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PROJECTS & COMMITTEES REPORT 2022-2023

Nature Kenya's volunteer focus groups undertook some exciting activities during 2022-2023. For more information on the groups, see www.naturekenya.org or the September 2022 Nature Net.

Insect Committee

- Insect identification requests from across East Africa; >50 free insect identifications done
- Talk on 'Trends in the Evolution of Herbivorous Insects'
- Working with Youth Committee and Friends of City Park on City Park's Boscowan Pollinator Garden.
- 'Bees of East Africa' handbook by Dr. Dino Martins being finalized. Launch by end of the year.
- Fieldwork for joint project on "Ecology of Invasive Species" with University of Texas ongoing.
- Our Friends the Pollinators: A Handbook of Pollinator Diversity downloaded 12,069 times from discoverpollinators.org & academia.edu



Red Glider at Kakamega Forest.

Photo by Dino J. Martins

Contact: insects.eanhs@gmail.com

Bird Committee

- Participated in the 2022 eBird global big days, helping to keep Kenya on the birding map by being one of the top 10 birding countries in the world.
- Published Scopus - Journal of East African Ornithology Vols. 42 (2) & 43 (1) online.
- Provided support for the African Waterbird Census at wetlands in Nairobi, its environs and Rift Valley lakes.
- Six interns supported to participate in bird ringing at Ngulia Lodge.



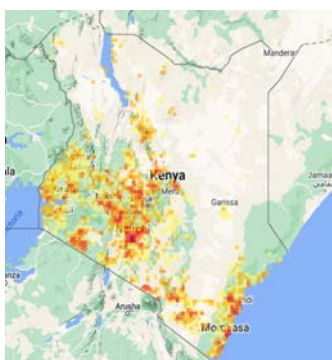
Pennant-winged Nightjar at Ngong Road Forest Sanctuary.

Photo by Matt McIlvenna

Contact: birds@naturekenya.org

Kenya Bird Map Project

- Digitizing the dataset of Kenya's first Bird Atlas of 1989 to act as basis for comparison in distribution with KBM
- Publishing a comprehensive paper describing the African Bird Atlas project (ABAP), this includes Kenya Bird Map
- Initiating development of a web interface for comparison of bird distributions from the initial Bird Atlas of Kenya of 1989 and recent citizen science data including KBM.



Contact: kenyabirdmap@naturekenya.org

Succulenta East Africa

- Talk by Dino Martins about evolution of the differing photosynthesis pathways.
- Succulenta field trips visited the Tsavo West/Lake Chala area & the plateau atop O'Lolokwe Mountain in Samburu East district.
- Supporting completion of a book on the stapeliad group of plant genera in Kenya, "Shy Faces of the Scrub" by the late Maria Dodds.



Desmidorchis sp.

Photo by Heather Elkins

Contacts: Dee Roberts - kiluma@gmail.com and Bob Entwistle - robertentwistle@gmail.com

Environmental Legislation & Policy Working Group (ELPWIG)

- Eighteen submissions on county policy documents and bills on environment
- Four on national policies (3 Parliament bills and 1 Senate bill)
- Seventeen submissions on departmental policies
- Seventeen on proposed projects EIA/ESIA/SEA/SESA reports
- Forty-nine submissions on county budget making process including CIDP, CADD and CFSP for 33 Counties
- Thirteen on concerns regarding issues around ecologically sensitive areas
- Conventions work – Participation in CBD CoP 15, CITES CoP, AEWA MoP 8, UN Ocean conference, XV World Forestry Congress and RAMCEA
- SSGs (17) and 17 CFAs participated on budget making process in counties.

Contact: advocacy@naturekenya.org

Kenya Herpetofauna Working Group (KHWG)

- Rescued terrapins from Infinity industrial park, relocated to NMK and City Park
- Snakes and snakebite: Management awareness training in Kitengela; Exhibition of live snakes at Lukenya Academy; Community awareness in Salawa village, Baringo, more than 100 people attended; Live snake exhibition at Kyuni kindergarten to create awareness snake rescued from a household in Nairobi
- Amphibian and reptile awareness at Kuraiha Primary School
- Upcoming: Annual amphibian and reptile biology course, May
- Snakes and snakebite awareness training in Mbeere, August.



Terrapin rescue

Contact: khwg@naturekenya.org

Cont'd from page 1

Nature Kenya Youth Committee

- Forest awareness and therapeutic walk at Thogoto forest
- Clean-up on World Environment Day celebrations
- Awareness at St. Hannah's Girls' School
- Awareness, tree growing & World Wetlands Day marathon at Alliance High School
- Clean Up on World Clean-up Day at Kikuyu town
- Establishment of a botanical garden in Kuraiha Primary School in collaboration with HARI
- Children's Biology program held at the Nairobi Snake Park in collaboration with Kamkunji Environmental Conservation Champions (KECC)
- Virtual talk on Safeguarding Wetland Habitats.



Photo by Macharia

Contact: youthcommittee@naturekenya.org

Plant Committee

- Completed compilation of A Field Guide to the Common Plants of Ngong Hills.
- Three members published "first records of two potentially invasive Daisy (Compositae) species from Laikipia, Kenya" in the Journal of East African Natural History.
- Production of the publication Threatened Plants in the Coastal Forests of Kenya
- Ten monthly plant walks successfully conducted at the NMK grounds
- Over 110 plants collected from Kajiado, Kiambu and Nairobi counties.



Aloe ngongensis, a regional endemic species, which was first described from the Ngong ecosystem.

Contacts: botany@museums.or.ke or office@naturekenya.org or Twitter: @EAHerbarium NMK

Mammal Committee

- Conducted 2 mammal mapping exercises (Nairobi NP & Lisa Ranch)
- Did 3 Media Interviews for MAKENYA mobile app (VOA, Nation, & KYODO News Agency)
- Increased sightings from 1,484 to 3,409 on MAKENYA mobile app
- Held 3 Mammal Virtual Talks (Small mammals of Laikipia, Lions of Ol Pajeta, & Giraffes of Tsavo)
- *Next Big Step*: Seeking collaborators and donors for an African Mammal Society.

Contact: mammal@naturekenya.org

Samaki Working Group of Kenya (SWG)

- Fishing expedition at Athi-Galana-Sabaki River in Sabaki in search for critically endangered *Neobola flaviabilis* (Athi sardine) fish. The fish was not found.
- Nine Fish species sampled and catalogued at Ichthyology, NMK.
- A virtual talk on Mangroves of Tana Delta by Peter Gitau, PhD student & SWG member.
- Participated in 2023 Ondiri wetland conservation run. Six members attended.



Photo by David Ouma

Contacts: davidouma207@gmail.com / info@kenweb.or.ke

Habitat Restoration Initiative for Eastern Africa (HARI)

- Trained members on seed collection, treatment & storage
- Field excursion at City Park to practice surveying and seeds collection skills
- Outreach programme to Kuraiha Primary and planted indigenous trees.

Contacts: office@naturekenya.org

Ethnoconservation

New Committee. Purpose is to:

- Conduct research in ethnoconservation efforts in Kenya.
- Mount educational and training programmes for community-based organizations.
- Document indigenous knowledge systems covering the major ethno-ecological zones in Kenya.
- Disseminate research findings through multi-media platforms.
- Plan protection of the environment with different people groups in Kenya.
- In 2022-2023, Held a virtual talk on Language, People & Plants in East Africa: An Ethnoconservation Approach to Sustainable Living.

Contact: ethnoconserve@naturekenya.org



A study at TICA Herbal Garden.
Photo by Richard Kipngeno

Friends of Nairobi Arboretum (FONA)

- Replacing the old tree labels that are dilapidated or worn-out with new weather proof labels.
- Educational activities like tree walks for schools, universities and members of public continued in 2022.
- FONA is looking for rebirth by having the delayed Arboretum Management Plan signed this year.

Contact: fona@naturekenya.org or education@nairobiarboretum.org

For updates visit
www.naturekenya.org

EDITORIAL TEAM

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Friends of City Park (FOCP)

- Implemented a Nature Based Systems (NBS) water quality improvement project
- Participated in development of the Park's Participatory Forest Management Plan (PFMP) with the CFA, KFS & other stakeholders.
- Working with Peponi School Charity on improving waste management at City Park
- Re-started free Sunday afternoon out-door yoga
- Initiated monthly clean-up activities in partnership with City Park's management
- Rehabilitation of fishponds and fishpond area is not completed yet.

friendsofcitypark.org f Foep.raiki @cityparkfriends 713130005 cityparkfriends@naturekenya.org



FOCP, KHS and City Park management during officiating and launch of fishpond area refurbishment.

Nairobi Biodiversity Parks

- Now member of Nairobi National Park Management Committee
- Two plant surveys in NNP undertaken in 2022, one in 2023.

Contact: fleur@africaonline.co.ke

Cyrtanthus sanguineus.

Photo by Heather Elkins



Tropical Biology Association (TBA)

- Ran 3 successful courses at Mpala Research Centre: Two TBA field courses: 47 young scientists from 22 countries trained. A Whitley Fund for Nature course: 14 past African Whitley Fund winners attend.
- Hosted online trainings on the TBA Virtual Learning platform: 300 people trained; 8 dynamic online courses made available
- Closed its Strengthening Conservation Capacity of CSOs in the Guinean Forests of West Africa Biodiversity Hotspot Project: 138 conservation practitioners from 45 CSOs trained; launched "West Africa women in conservation Network"
- 2023 Plans: Run a field course in Uganda after 6 years of absence.

Contacts: tba-Africa@tropical-biology.org



A field course student.

Photo by Kate Davison

Journal of East African Natural History (JEANHS)

- Vol 111 Part 1 and Part 2 (2022) published; 7 papers and an obituary for Prof Kim Howell
- Available online (only) via BioOne and African Journals Online (Open Access)
- Income from BioOne in 2022 was \$9,449 (without surplus)
- Electronic licensing agreement with BioOne renewed. From 2023 onwards, every paper will be brought immediately online as an individual issue.

Contact: Bytebier@ukzn.ac.za or office@naturekenya.org

Joint EANHS-NMK Library

- Nature Kenya purchased 6 desktop computers
- Considerable strides made towards a remotely-accessible digital library (OPAC)
- One of the CPUs is being used as a temporary server to run the KOHA software
- Team effort by NMK Library & IT staff: Appreciation to NMK's Ag DG who approved 2 volunteers who have been instrumental in the process; over 5,000 records.

Ongoing projects:

- Updating history of EANHS
- Afrievolve webinar: How NK engages volunteers in conservation action

Contact: library@museums.or.ke

naturalist

New Comet in September Skies

By Fleur Ng'weno

In August, an amateur astronomer in Japan spotted a new comet! Comets are objects of dust, ice and gases that travel in long orbits around the sun. Comet Nishimura or C/2023 P1 may be visible through binoculars or even unaided eyes this month. It looks like a blurry, fuzzy, greenish spot of light.

In the first week of September, look 2 to 3 hours before dawn low in the east-northeast, near then in the constellation Leo the Lion. Use astronomy apps like Star Walk 2 or Sky Tonight to help you find the comet.

Comet Nishimura will reach perihelion (nearest the sun) on the 17th; unless it breaks up, it may be visible in late September low in the west after sunset. For more details, see <https://starwalk.space/en/news/new-comet-c2023-p1>

Planets, Sept '23

Brilliant Venus is now rising in the east before dawn. Little Mercury follows, highest on Sept. 22. Bright Jupiter is high in the west at dawn, near the waning moon on the 5th.

In the evening, golden Saturn rises in the east, and reddish Mars sinks in the west. The thin crescent moon appears near Mars on Sept. 16, near the star Spica on the 17th. The moon, gibbous now, is near Saturn on the 26th.

September Stars

The constellations of the Scorpion – with the star Antares as its fiery eye – and Sagittarius,

the Archer – forming a teapot or basket shape – stretch across the southwestern sky (see *August Nature Net*). The moon is near Antares on Sept. 21.

The bright star Altair, flanked by two fainter stars, is high overhead. North (left) of Altair and low in the sky is the brilliant white star Vega. It's in a tiny constellation called the Lyre. Below Altair, east of Vega, is another bright star, Deneb.

On a clear, dark night, away from city lights, you may see the Milky Way stretching like a pale ribbon across the sky, past Deneb, Altair, Sagittarius and the Scorpion. It is our galaxy, made up of millions and millions of stars.

At dawn, the constellation Orion the Hunter is high in the east. Below Orion is the brightest star, Sirius. The second brightest star, Canopus, is in the south, and the star Procyon is north (left) of Sirius.

Moon Sept '23

Sept 6: Last quarter. Sept 15: New moon; on the 16th, a thin crescent moon above the sunset, near Mars. Sept 22: First quarter. Sept 29: Full moon. As the full moon nearest the equinox, it is called the Harvest Moon.

September Sun

The equinox is on Sept 23 this year; the sun will be in the south until the next equinox in March. For us on the equator, the sun will rise early and set early during the next 3 months. ☀

Birding Updates

Wednesday Morning Birdwalks in Nairobi

6th September – Museum Grounds/Michuki Memorial Park. Meet at 8:00 am in the open space in front of the entrance to the museum galleries.

13th September – Karen Blixen Museum. Meet at 8:30 am in the Karen Blixen Museum's Car Park area. Directions: Coming from the city centre, take Ngong Road towards Karen. Turn left at Shell Petrol Station onto Karen Road. The Museum is about 1.5Kms after Karen Country Club.

20th September – Paradise Lost. Meet at Paradise Lost Main Gate at 8:30 am. Directions: Take Kiambu Road. Turn Left at Paradise Lost junction in Thindigua after Runda Greens before Quick Mart Supermarket. Turn right at Kencom Apartments just after Kasarini Primary School. It's about 500m to the main gate. Thanks to the management for welcoming the birdwalk.

27th September – Oloolua Forest Nature Trail, Institute of Primate Research, Karen. Meet at 8:30 am at the Nature Trail's main entrance. Directions: Coming from the city centre, take Ngong Road towards Karen. Turn left at Shell Petrol Station onto Karen Road. The Nature Trail is about 500m after Karen Blixen Museum. There is an entrance fee of Ksh. 100 per adult and Ksh. 50 per child for Nature Kenya members (bring your membership card – soft or hard copy).

17th September. Sunday Birdwatch – Olorgesailie Prehistoric Site. Meet at 8.30am in the Olorgesailie Prehistoric Site's Car Park area. It's about 90 kms southwest of Nairobi on Magadi Road. Directions: Coming from the city centre, take Langata Road to Magadi Road. After Ongata Rongai and Kiserian, you will reach the edge of the Rift Valley and travel down many steep hills. The Olorgesailie Prehistoric Site's signpost is on the left after Tinga (OI Tepesi) Shopping Centre.

For public means, take Kiserian matatus at Railways bus stage in Nairobi. From Kiserian, take Magadi matatus.

It will be a full day trip, bring snacks/lunch and plenty of drinking water.

If you have questions, please write to news@naturekenya.org or phone 0780-149200.

Bird Ringing at Nairobi National Museum grounds usually take place on Tuesday mornings. Please confirm with Titus Imboma <Imbomati911@gmail.com> Phone 0721-649452.

Wildlife Census at Kapiti Plains will take place on **Sunday 1st October, 2023**. If you would like to participate, contact Richard Kipngeno on email <news@naturekenya.org> or phone number 0780-149200.

Thursday Birdwalks in Malindi

7th September – Mayungu. Meet at 4:00 pm at the Malindi Museum near the Nature Kenya Membership Office.

14th September – Mtangani via Afya Hospital. Meet at 4:00 pm at the Malindi Museum near the Nature Kenya Membership Office.

21st September – Malindi Harbor. Meet at 4:00 pm at the Malindi Museum near the Nature Kenya Membership Office.

28th September – Sabaki Bridge. Meet at 4:00 pm at the Malindi Museum near the Nature Kenya Membership Office.

30th September. Saturday Birdwatch – Lake Jilore. Meet at 7:00 am at Gede Stage.

For more information, email: <malindimembers@naturekenya.org> or phone 0725223042.

Mombasa Birdwalks are held the 3rd Saturday of each month. To check meeting time and place, check Facebook page: <<https://www.facebook.com/groups/FFJmombasa/>>

Or contact: Taibali Hamzali <thamzali@gmail.com> / 0733-980540 or Kelvin Mazera <klvnrua@yahoo.com> / 0720-928783



MASHUJAA WEEKEND MEMBERS' CAMPING TRIP

Lakes Nakuru & Elmenteita
October 20 - 22, 2023

Ksh. 20,000
Per Person

Pay Ksh. 5,000 to reserve

3 Days, 2 Nights
PACKAGE INCLUDES

- ✓ Transport, meals, entry fees
- ✓ Camping at Kikopey Beach Camp
- ✓ Game drive at Lake Nakuru National Park
- ✓ Game drive at Soysambu Wildlife Conservancy
- ✓ Visit to Kariandusi Pre-historic Site and Museum
- ✓ Visit to Hyrax Hill Pre-historic Site and Museum

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For more inquiries email Angela
nkmembership@naturekenya.org
or Richard news@naturekenya.org
or call +254 (0) 739 200216

Yes! Start my NatureKenya membership

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