

KOMBA

Issue 3 - 2010

*“Look at me,
I’m the rare
Rothschild”*

WCK motto “Learn to conserve for a better tomorrow”



KOMBA is the Kiswahili name for the Lesser Bushbaby and the symbol of the Wildlife Clubs of Kenya (WCK). The magazine is owned and published by the WCK.

WCK - P.O.Box 20184 PC 00200 Nairobi Kenya

Hamjambo WCK members

2010 has been the International Year of Biodiversity and as we come to the end of the year, we hope that you are aware of the importance of biodiversity and the need to behave more responsibly on Earth. It's the only planet we have to live on - in other words - our only home.

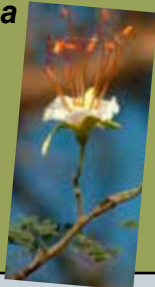
We destroy our biodiversity - we destroy our home - it's that simple.

So we hope that you youngsters are going to be future 'green' advocates in whatever you do - even if you become industrialists because the future of **technology is green.**

WCK also welcomes Tsofa Mweni as the Education Officer for Rift Valley, Nakuru and we wish Mr. Majani a pleasant retirement.

Happy New Year

Rupi



Delonix elata flower

WCK Objectives

-To spread interest and knowledge about wildlife and the environment among the people of Kenya in particular and East Africa in general.

-In this way, to make them aware of the great economic, cultural and aesthetic value of natural resources.

-To develop a better understanding of the need to conserve natural resources for the benefit of the nation and its people.

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is made up of representatives of various stakeholding government departments & parastatals, conservation entities and club patrons as follows:

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Komba Editorial

Rupi Mangat - Editor
Eric Deche, Philip Gitahi, Margaret Otieno.

Cover and middle spread : Rothschild Giraffe by Zoe Muller

Komba is owned and published by WCK

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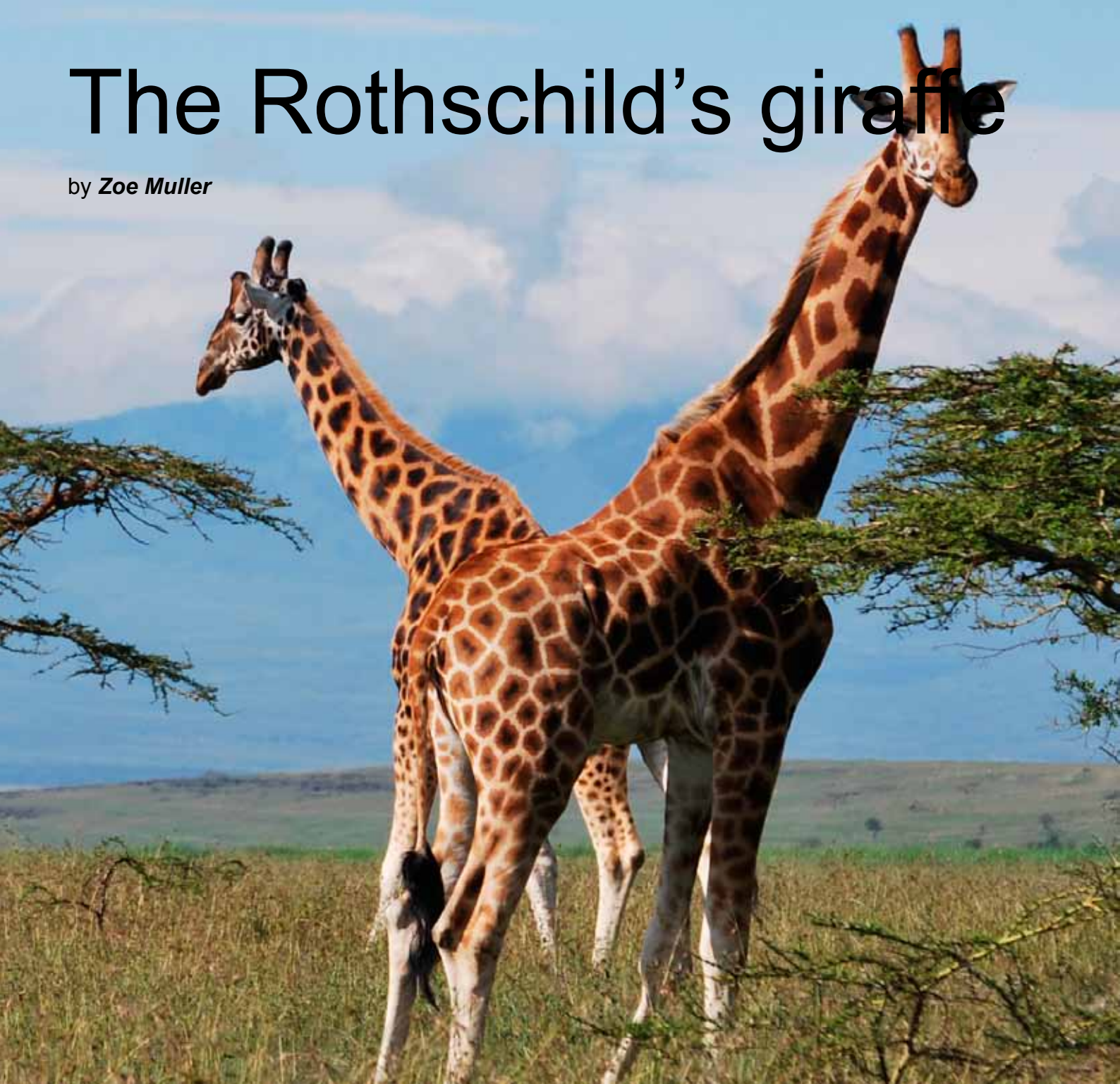
WCK CLUB BENEFITS

- * 3 issues of Komba-WCK termly magazine
- * Free entry to Kenya National Parks & Reserves under KWS
- * Free lectures and video/slide shows
- * Borrow Wildlife Video Films at reduced rates
- * Students' half rate accommodation at the WCK hostels
- * WCK roadshows by the Mobile Education Unit
- * The chance to help conserve wildlife
- * The chance to win prizes in WCK competitions.

Remember to renew your membership early every year!

The Rothschild's giraffe

by *Zoe Muller*



There are three giraffe sub-species in Kenya; the Reticulated giraffe of northern Kenya, the Maasai giraffe of southern Kenya and the Rothschild's giraffe of the Rift Valley and western Kenya. The presence of these three giraffes makes Kenya a very special place because it suggests that giraffe evolution first occurred here. Kenya also is the only country in the world where three sub-species of the nine are found.

*Story and pictures by **Zoe Muller**.*

Once found across southern Sudan, western Kenya and Uganda, the Rothschild's giraffe is extinct across most of its former habitat. There is one small group of Rothschild's giraffe in Uganda, but the rest are in Kenya.

The Rothschild's giraffe is very unique. It has five ossicones (horns or bumps on its head) while other giraffe have three. Genetic research now suggests that the Rothschild's giraffe might even be a new species of giraffe!

There are **less than 650 Rothschild's giraffe left in the wild**. Over 80% are in Kenya. It is declared **Endangered** by the IUCN. Kenya has an important role in its conservation and survival in the wild.

The Rothschild could become **extinct** in **fifty years** but a new research project could help them survive in the wild.

The **Rothschild's Giraffe Project** is based at Soysambu Conservancy near Nakuru. It is home to about **65** Rothschild's giraffe, or **10% of the world's remaining population!**

The 48,000-acre conservancy lies on the shores of Lake Elmenteita and Lake Nakuru (both Ramsar sites meaning wetlands of international importance and for the government to look after them) and the volcanoes of Ol Doinyo Eburru and Menengai. The islands of Elmenteita are the only breeding ground of the **Great White pelican** in East Africa.

The Conservancy provides a safe environment for the Rothschild where they can live, reproduce and thrive. With the help of the Conservancy and the Rothschild's Giraffe Project we can ensure that this amazing, gentle animal survives for many generations to come.

Giraffe Centre in Nairobi is also an important sanctuary and breeding area for the Rothschild.

Zoe Muller, from the University of Bristol, UK, is conducting the first scientific assessment of the Rothschild's giraffe which will contribute to their conservation in Kenya.

Pictures of giraffes:
Copyright Zoe Muller



Giraffe glib

Height: Up to 18 feet tall
Weight: Up to 1,360Kg
Life span: 15 to 20 years in the wild
Gestation: 14 months

Number of young at birth: usually one, but twins have been recorded
Size at birth: 6 feet tall, weight 45-68 Kgs
Age of maturity: 3 - 5 years

A group of giraffe is known as: a tower of giraffes.

A giraffe heart is the size of a beach ball and weighs **14Kg**. **Giraffe** give birth standing up. The fall and impact on the ground at birth functions to kick-start the calf's lungs and heart.

A giraffe sleeps for 1 - 12 minutes at a time. They can sleep lightly standing up, but for deep sleep they must be lying down. **Despite** their long neck, giraffe have the same number of neck vertebrae that all mammals do (including us!) - seven.

A giraffe tongue is around **20 inches long** and blue-black in colour. They use their long tongue to browse on thorny Acacia trees and the colour prevents it from getting sunburnt.

The record running speed of a giraffe is **34.7 mph**.

A giraffe's feet are like a **dinner plate**-12 inches across!

As the tallest land mammal, they also have the **longest tails** - about 2.4 metres long.

Giraffe avoid head-rush when bending down to drink because their blood vessels are elasticated. This ensures the blood pressure can remain stable when they bend their heads down to drink, otherwise they would pass out.

For more on the project, visit www.giraffereseearch.com

About Acacia

What's in a name?



An acacia tree in Ethiopia

*That which we call an acacia
By any other name would smell as sweet*

By Dr Mark Nicholson Ph.D. (Cambridge)

In 2011, the name 'Acacia' will be debated at an international conference. Mark Nicholson, a physiologist explains

In Africa there are about 100 species of Acacia. In Australia there are 1400 acacia species, which do not have spines, as there were no big animals to protect against. When they are fully-grown, they tend not to have leaves which makes them very drought tolerant. They photosynthesize from flattened leaf stalks. But as they all had similar flowers, they were put into the same genus. Unfortunately for the taxonomists, many families, genera and species now have to go into different boxes as we use DNA, rather than flower structure, to look at relationships.

When we looked at the DNA of the Australian species it was clear that they all came from **one common ancestor** whereas the African Acacias not only seem to have nothing to do with the Australian genus but **also in fact themselves should not belong in one genus**. The African species

need three genera names. But all acacias will still be in the same family (Mimosaceae)

Many people in Africa feel they will lose the name Acacia. The Australians voted to 'keep' the name as there are more Acacia species than in Africa, India or the Middle East. In 2011, the taxonomists will vote again. The name, acacia, may stay in Africa (where it originated) and the Australians will have to find a new name.

Does it matter? I think not. We will still call them acacias because the name has stuck in English. Most people like to use the common names for trees: like the Umbrella thorn, and the Fever Tree.

My advice: grow and protect acacias, smell the flowers (they make delicious honey) and worry not about its name.

What do you think?
Write and tell us.

Who is a physiologist?

Physiology is the study of life, specifically, how cells, tissues, and organisms function. Physiologists try to answer questions in areas ranging from the functions of single cells to the interactions between human populations and our environment here on earth, the moon, and beyond. Physiologists work in laboratories, in libraries, in the field, and in space.



Australian Blackwood
(*Acacia melanoxylon*)

This is a typical Australian Acacia. When grown up, it has no leaves only flattened leaf-stalks which photosynthesize.

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Blue Swallow

Ruma National Park
near Lake Victoria

In July, **Gregor Subik** of Kawka Production from **Slovenia** pictured this **Blue Swallow** in Ruma National Park.

Blue swallows are endangered. It is likely that the bird will become extinct in South Africa where it breeds and then comes to spend summer months around Lake Victoria. In the 1986/87 bird count there were only 67 pairs counted in KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa. We don't know how many are in Kenya but they are seen less now because all the grasslands are being turned into farms.

WCK Annual Membership

*Club - Ksh 750
 Associate - Ksh 500
 Corporate - Ksh 5,000
 Foreign - USD 30 or Sterling Pound 20 or 25 Euros
 Student membership cards - Ksh 20
 Video library subscription - Ksh 200
 Video library registration - Ksh 500
 (Only one tape allowed at a time)

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Ksh 100 - member student per night
 Ksh 150 - non-member student per night
 Ksh 150 - WCK adult teacher members
 Ksh 200 - non WCK adult members
 East African - Ksh 300 per person per night
 Non resident - Ksh 500 per person night
 Msa Rates - Members Ksh 300, Non members Ksh 400

Guest House

Adult - Ksh 1,000
 Children - Ksh 600
 Mombasa - contact the Mombasa office

Hall Hire

WCK members - Ksh 3,500
 Non members - Ksh 5,000



The artistic logo shows diversity of life on Earth such as the marine, flora and fauna and how we, as humans, are part of biodiversity and not apart from it.

2010 is special because it's the year we're celebrating the International Year of Biodiversity. Biodiversity is animals, plants and micro-organisms, the genes within them, the ecosystems of which they are part, and the interactions among them. Here are some of the world's threatened species.

Biodiversity is life Biodiversity is our life

Grandidier's Baobab



Grandidier's Baobab,

(*Adansonia grandidieri*), is listed as 'Endangered' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. It is found only in Madagascar.

This species is heavily exploited for its fruits and seeds for food and for the extraction of cooking oil, the bark is used to make ropes, and the spongy wood is dried and sold for thatch. However, the greatest threat comes from its habitat being turned into agricultural land. Since 2008, the Global Trees Campaign has been involved in conserving it. Grandidier's Baobab, in particular, is likely to benefit from the creation of protected areas.

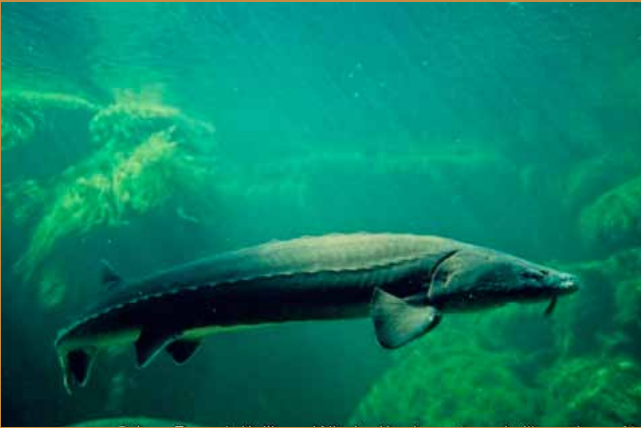


Oxalis dines

The species is known from eight locations in Western Cape, South Africa. The sub-populations are isolated as they occur in seasonal pools. Very little is known about the species method of dispersal so the species is not identified as severely fragmented. There is an ongoing decline in habitat mainly due to trampling and grazing by livestock. The species has an extent of occurrence of 6,600 km² and an area of occupancy of less than 200 square kms. It is listed as Vulnerable.

Scientists say over one fifth of the world's plants are under threat of extinction.

Acipenser sturio



Critically endangered - 2009

Once a very wide ranging species from the North and (Eastern) north Atlantic and Mediterranean coast of Europe and the Black Sea (one record from the White Sea in the 1950s), the last remaining population in France is still declining. The species last spawned in 1994 in the Garonne, where dams, pollution and river regulation has degraded and destroyed spawning sites. There are also plans to start gravel extraction. The current population size is between 20-750 wild, mature individuals (in the past three years there has been substantial stocking, but these animals will not reproduce until ~2016). Under normal population circumstances, the average reproductive age is suspected to be about 25 years. There has been more than a 90% population decline in the past 75 years due to loss of habitat, along with pollution and exploitation.

This species now remains in just one location, where 27 spawning grounds (less than 10 km²) remain potentially accessible (the major threat to this species is bycatch). As this species continues to be caught as bycatch, the population is still decreasing.

Grizzled Pintail



The Grizzled Pintail (*Acisoma panorpoides*) is widespread in Africa (except in dense rain forest), southern Europe, the Middle East, southern Asia, and the Indian Ocean Islands. It occurs in swampy and well-vegetated open habitats. Drainage and destruction of swampy habitats is a potential threat in some parts of its range, but generally the population is so large and widespread at present that it is assessed as Least Concern.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) is the world's main authority on the conservation status of species .

Species are classified as following:

Extinct (EX) - No individuals remaining.

Extinct in the Wild (EW) - Known only to survive in captivity, outside its historic range.

Critically Endangered (CR) - Extremely high risk of extinction in the wild.

Endangered (EN) - High risk of extinction in the wild.

Vulnerable (VU) - High risk of endangerment in the wild.

Near Threatened (NT) - Likely to become endangered in the near future.

Least Concern (LC) - Lowest risk.

Data Deficient (DD) - Not enough data to make an assessment of its risk of extinction.

Not Evaluated (NE) - Has not yet been evaluated against the criteria.

"Threatened" is a grouping of three categories: Critically Endangered, Endangered, and Vulnerable.

Dazzling *Delonix Elata*

Story and pictures
By Najma Dharani



Flower

Delonix elata is a beautiful deciduous tree about 4-6 m tall sometimes reaching 12 m. It grows in hot climates and its flowers add dazzling colours against the blue sky. *Delonix* is from the Greek word “*delos*”, meaning evident and “*onux*”, a claw in allusion to the shape of the petals; the epithet “*elata*” means lofty or tall.



leaves

Natural Habitat

D. elata prefers hot, dry Acacia-Commiphora bushland and thicket. It normally occurs on rocky, shallow, red soils.

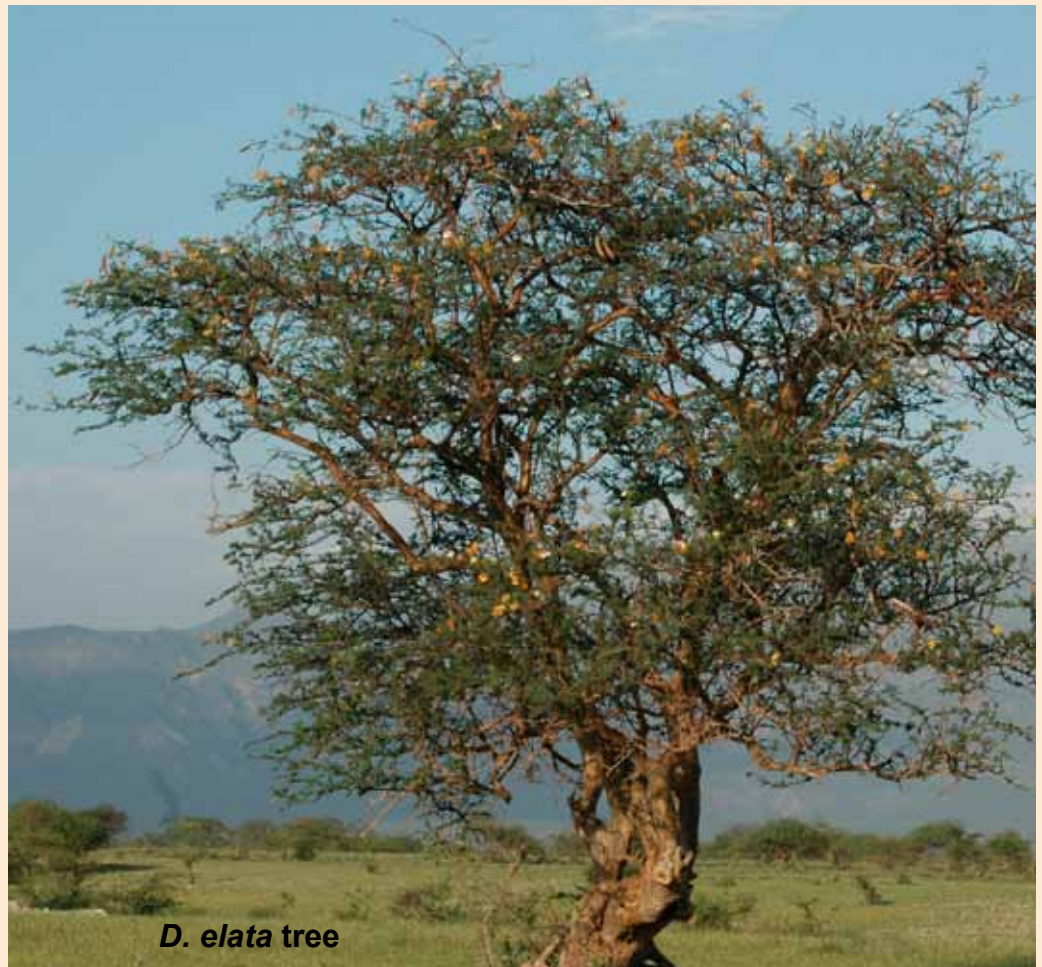
Geographic distribution

Native : Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda

Exotic : India, Sri Lanka, Zambia

Propagation and management

D. elata is a fast growing tree raised easily from seed. Because of its high light requirements, it should be planted in full sunlight. Young seedlings need protection from browsers. Pollarding, lopping and trimming are recommended management practices.



D. elata tree

Functional uses

Fodder: The bean is a promising source of micronutrients for goats, sheep, camels and cattle which eat the foliage and young pods.

The wood can be used for making utensils, poles and as fuel.

Uses

Erosion control: *D. elata* has potential use in soil conservation. In India it has been successfully used in protecting channel and river banks. It is a good tree for reforestation of difficult sites.

Traditional medicine: Twigs are used as toothbrushes and are believed to cure bleeding gums and other mouth diseases. An infusion of the bark is used for treating bilharzia and diarrhea.



Pod

Tree books by Dr Najma Dharani

The book “**Medicinal Plants of East Africa-An Illustrated Guide**” is the first photographically illustrated guide to East Africa’s most important medicinal plants. 136 plant species are described which are in common use among traditional healers in East Africa.

With more than 600 colour photographs, the book ensures that each plant, with its bark, leaves, flowers, and fruits, is pictured for easy identification in the field. Each has a short summary of what modern science tells us about the healing effects of the herbal remedies that are derived from them.

Her other books are **Trees and Shrubs of East Africa** and **Acacias of East Africa**.

To buy call 0722-472012 or 0733-822405 for a special price to WCK members of Ksh 2000

Matthews Range

For rare bugs, birds, mammals and plants

Dino Martins counts 125 butterfly species in two weeks which is about **15%** of all Kenya's butterflies, and more than twice found in the UK.



Mother of Pearl by Dino Martins

The Matthews Range of mountains is in the drylands of northern Kenya. The tropical highland forested range stands isolated in the flatlands that stretch for 100 kilometres in any direction. It is about 10 million years old.

Scientists call it the "sky island" because it is quite untouched. It evolved free of influence from the rest of the region by the dry gulf too vast for most plants and insects to cross and for any serious human encroachment.

The Samburu who graze their cattle in the surrounding grasslands only take their cattle to the hills during drought or

sometimes when the elders want to harvest plants for traditional medicines.



Junonia tugela by Dino Martins

Recently Nature Conservancy, a US-based conservation organisation and the Northern Rangelands Trust in Laikipia arranged the first scientific survey of the ecology of the

Matthews Range to document its biological diversity for conservation. The local Namanyak community will monitor the health of the forest by using 'indicator' species like butterflies and also record what the local elders know of the forest.

"Butterflies are good indicators of the health of an ecosystem because they can't survive without good, clean water and lots of food-sources," says entomologist Dino Martins.

According to Dino, insects also tell us the ecosystem has been very stable, and the high diversity especially of butterflies suggests that the forest has been here for several million years.



Papilio-rex by Dino Martins

For More about insects email:
insects.eanhs@gmail.com

The Matthews Cycad and the Weevil

Discovery in Matthews Range



The Matthews Cycad It's very rare

Quentin Luke, a leading Kenyan botanist found the Matthews Cycad - a huge palm-like tree with bottle-green fronds whose origins stretch back 280 million years when they dominated the landscape.

The cycad is called ***Encephalartos tegulanus*** and is endemic to the Matthew's Range and a few forest patches in northern Kenya.

Dino discovered the pollinator of the cycad which is a new species of weevil and they are working on the description. Hence the weevil will be named some years from now as taxonomy is a slow process

Cycads and weevils share a very ancient pollination system which evolved hundreds of millions of years ago. As there are separate male and female cycad plants, they require a pollinator to carry pollen from



New weevil discovered by and un-named as yet. It pollinates the Matthews Cycad. Pictures (copyright) of cycad and weevil by Dino Martins

the male cones to the female cones. Without the pollinator the cycad cannot produce seed.

Like anywhere else, with growing numbers of cattle looking for grass to graze and humans looking for timber to burn, the Matthews Range is under threat.

Articles condensed from an article by Peter Greste, BBC East Africa correspondent.

Poko the Chimpanzee

@ Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary
in Ol Pejeta Conservancy



Poko on right with friend



Poko is one of the oldest chimps at the conservancy. He spent his first nine years in a wire cage where all he could do was either sit or stand. Today he enjoys being groomed by his chimp friends.

The Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary is the only place in Kenya to see chimpanzees. Opened in 1993 for orphaned and abused chimpanzees from west and central Africa, there are 42 chimpanzees at the sanctuary.

Most chimps have been rescued from terrible conditions affected by wars, logging and poachers including the bush-

meat trade. The demand from people in wealthy countries for tropical hardwoods means the west and central African forests, that are home to wild chimpanzees are being destroyed. As forests are destroyed, all wild animals living within the forests are hunted to supply the illegal bushmeat trade. Often whole chimpanzee families are butchered, leaving behind infants that are later exported to zoos and medical institutions or sold as exotic pets.

Chimpanzees are highly intelligent animals who share 98.6% of their genetic DNA with humans. They make use of tools such as rocks to crack nuts or sticks inserted into mounds to 'fish' for termites. They are the only primates to have developed tool use to

such an advanced level.

Chimpanzees are part of the great ape family along with orangutans, gorillas and bonobos. The males, at over a metre tall and weighing between 35 and 70 kilograms, are larger and stronger than the females. Chimpanzees have long arms for climbing and nimble hands and feet with opposable thumbs to grasp objects and branches.

They are very sociable and live in communities of 15 to 100 animals, led by dominant males called the "alpha" male.

Chimpanzees spend hours grooming each other. At dusk, wild chimpanzees build nests 6-25 meters above ground (by pulling over branches to make a soft bed).

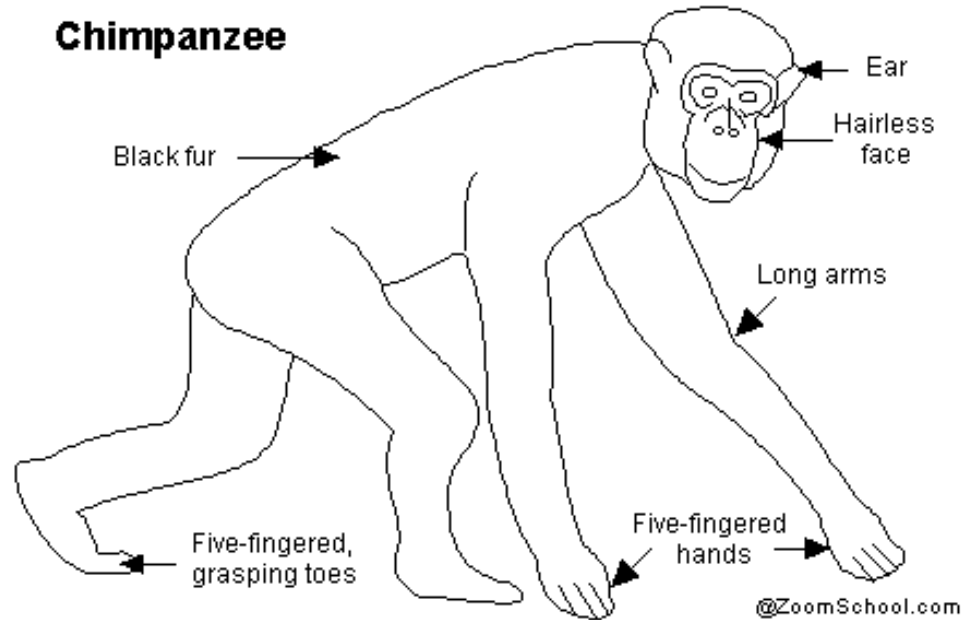


All pictures by Rupi Mangat

There are about 175,000 chimpanzees remaining in the wild. The chimpanzee is an endangered species and protected by international law under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary: Open:
9:00am to 10:30am & 3pm to 4:30pm.

Chimpanzee



ANATOMY

Chimpanzees have very long arms (the arms are longer than the legs), and a short body.

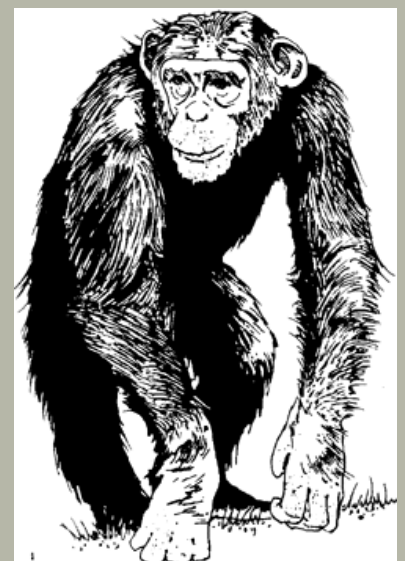
Hair and Skin:

Chimpanzees are covered with black hair on most of their body (except their fingers, palms, armpits, and bottoms of their feet). Baby chimpanzees have very pale skin in the areas that have no hair and a white tuft of hair on the rump.



Chimp Champs Quiz

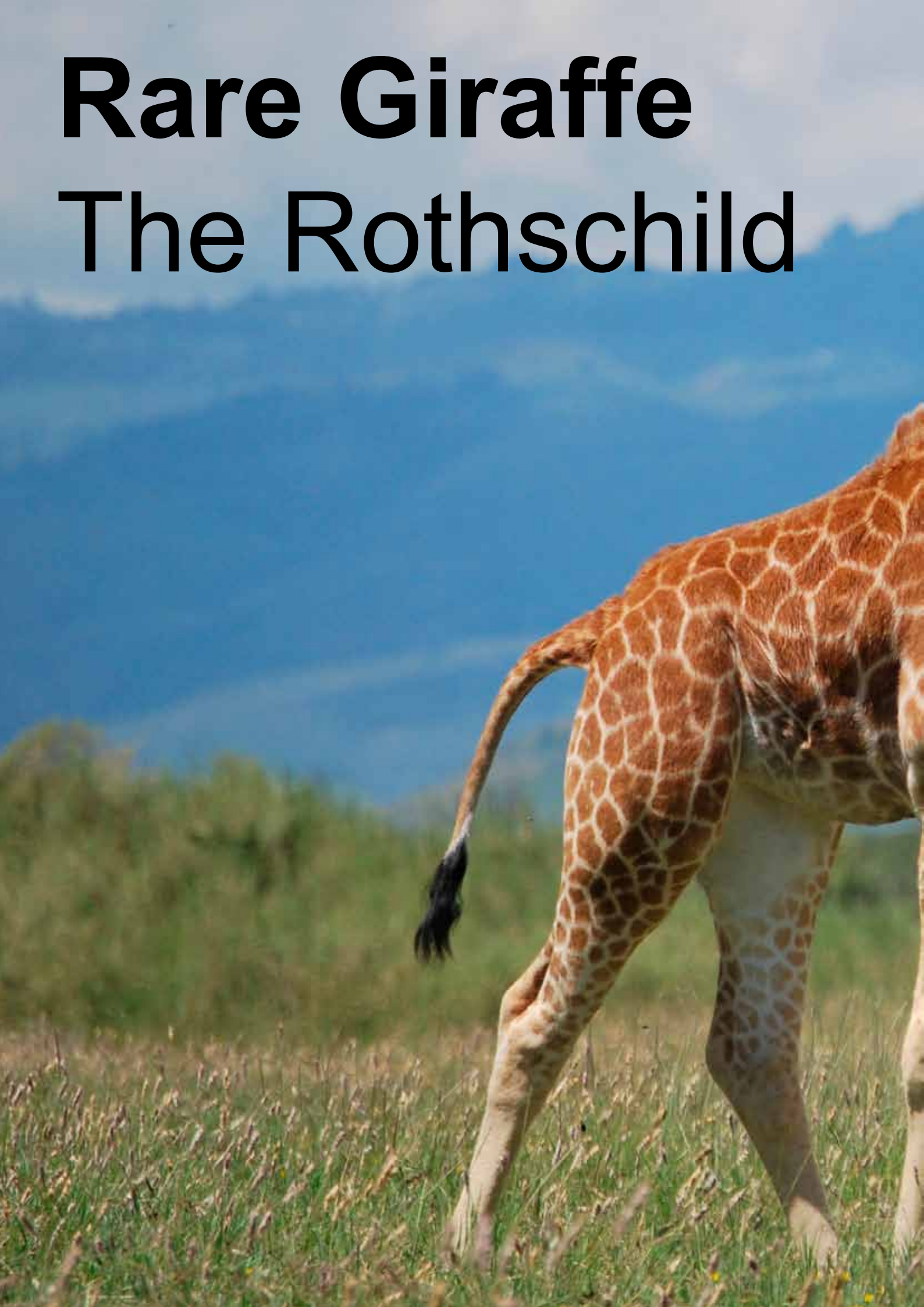
1. Do chimpanzees live a solitary existence or do they live in small, stable communities?
2. Are chimpanzees diurnal (more active during the day) or nocturnal (more active during the night)?
3. Are chimpanzees omnivores, herbivores, detritivores, or carnivores?
4. Name a type of chimpanzee tool and what it is used for.
5. Where do chimpanzees sleep?
6. What is a wild chimpanzee's life span?
7. Do any chimpanzees live in rainforests?
8. Which are longer, the chimpanzee's legs or its arms?
9. Name a famous scientist who studied chimpanzees.
10. Which continent do chimpanzees come from?



For more log on <http://olpejetaconservancy.org>

Rare Giraffe

The Rothschild





kombā

Issue 3- 2010

Lake Elmenteita in the Rift Valley is now a wild-life sanctuary under Gazette Notice 8077 of July 6, 2010, bringing it one step closer to a World Heritage Site. Soysambu Conservancy lies on its shores.

The gazetted area covers 2533.9 hectares. The 18-square km soda lake, off the Nairobi-Nakuru highway has thousands of flamingos, pelicans, crested grebe while the reedbeds are fishing grounds for Night herons and pelicans. There are also large herds of buffalo, waterbuck, eland, giraffe and other animals.

Elmenteita means “dust place” from the Masai word *muteita*.



Lake Elmenteita with flamingoes. In the back-ground is the famous hill, the Sleeping Moran



Baraka at OI Pejeta Rhino conservancy

Baraka the Black Rhino

Morani, the tame black rhino at OI Pejeta died in his sleep on Saturday August 9th 2008. His place has been taken by Baraka, who is the first rhino born in the wild on OI Pejeta. Baraka meaning ‘blessings’ in Kiswahili. He lost one eye in a fight with another rhino and had a cataract in the other. Being blind, he cannot return to the wild. Baraka is quiet and doesn’t like too many people around him unlike Morani. Hence a feeding platform has been created for Baraka’s visitors.

Pea sized frog found on Borneo island

Scientists have discovered a frog the size of a pea, the smallest found in Asia, Africa or Europe, on the Southeast Asian island of Borneo.

Adult males of the new micro-species range in size from 10.6 and 12.8 millimetres and the pea-sized amphibian has been named *Microhyla nepenthicola* after the plant on Borneo on which it lives. Originally scientists thought they were the young of other species.

The mini frogs were found on the edge of a road leading to the summit of the Gunung Serapi mountain in the Kubah National Park in the Malaysian state of Sarawak. For more read www.conservation.org/lostfrogs.



Microhyla nepenthicola

Picture courtesy of Indraneil Das, Institute of Biodiversity and Environmental Conservation

Want to see the rarest rhinos of them all?

Go to Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Laikipia to see the

Northern White Rhinos



Tasting freedom - Najin and Fatu at Ol Pejeta Conservancy

Picture courtesy: Batian Craig

The Northern white rhinos (*Ceratotherium simum*) were once found in north-western Uganda, southern Chad, south-western Sudan, the eastern part of Central African Republic and north-eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). But since mid 2003, poaching reduced the wild population to about five.

The five known remaining Northern White Rhinos that were in Garamba National Park in DRC were last seen three years ago and could be dead. If confirmed, this would make the Northern White Rhino extinct in the wild.

Now you can visit Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Laikipia just near Nanyuki to see Najin, Fatu, Sudan and Suni who are four of the world's last remaining eight Northern White Rhinos in their pens on regular game drives. They were translocated from Dvur Kralove Zoo, which until late 2009, had



Arriving in style at Ol Pejeta from the Czech Republic - the northern white rhinos in the crates

Picture courtesy: Michael Dalton-Smith

been their home in the Czech Republic.

The four arrived at Ol Pejeta at around 12:30 local time on 20th Dec, after traveling by air and road. The following day, Sudan - the 32-year-old male - ate fresh grass for the first time in over 30 years. He was moved from Africa when he was about a year old.

The four have been brought back to Africa to provide the rhinos with the most favourable breeding conditions so that they do not become extinct. The climatic, dietary and security conditions at Ol Pejeta are closest to what they would have had in the wild to breed.

Ol Pejeta is East Africa's largest Black Rhino Sanctuary with 84 black rhinos and 11 southern white rhinos

The 'new' rhinos have been ear notched which is like a name tag for each rhino. They have also been dehorned and transmitters drilled into the remaining horn.

While the dehorning was taking place on the sedated rhinos, Najin & Fatu's nails were trimmed because they were overgrown and starting to affect the animals' foot - a common problem in zoo animals.

Check <http://olpejetaconservancy.org>

Kora National

By Rupi Mangat

Kora National Park was once the haunt of George Adamson or Bwana Simba, the lion man. At that time, Kora was just a reserve where George lived at Kampi Ya Simba (camp of the lions). Kora was full of animals like rhinos and elephants and dry thorny bushland where the Tana flows through. It was here that George Adamson found place for the lions he lived with. Today he is buried in Kora with his brother Terence and his favourite lion, Boy.



George and his lion

When George moved to Kora from next-door Meru National Park, all was quiet until the mid 1970s when the poachers set in and for almost 20 years shot almost every elephant and rhino in sight.

George Adamson was shot dead by the Shifta bandits on 20th August 1989 when he dashed off in his battered land rover to rescue tourists. His two assistants were killed with him. George's land rover including the door with its bullet holes is at Elsa-mere, the home of Joy and George Adamson on the shores of Naivasha. The story of the Adamson's and the lions begins in 1956 when George gave Joy three cubs whose mother he shot in self-defense, near Isiolo, in the infamous Northern Frontier District which was then closed territory.

One of the cubs was Elsa and Elsa's story became worldwide with the "Born Free" series of novels. In 1964 the movie "Born Free" was released.

white goatee and sandals, he was a simple man.

George was criticized by many who found his work of little scientific value because lions were not an endangered species. In "My Pride and Joy," George wrote: "Lions and the other big cats are being confined, as are elephants, to a limited number of pockets which grow fewer and smaller each year: some are threatened, others have already disappeared."



Kampi ya Simba in Kora, by the 400-foot-high rock hill where George and his lions lived

Adamson had no degrees or any great scientific achievements. Dressed in khaki shorts and shirtless, supporting a

Today lions are endangered. From about 30,000 lions in the 1970s in Kenya, there are about 2,000 left and in twenty years they could become extinct in the wild.

The human-wildlife conflict is

Park



Tony Fotzjohn who was George's assistant with Mark Cheruiyot, warden at Kora National Park by George's grave

one of the biggest threats to lions and other cats. In recent times, there are chemical agro-pesticides such as Furadan which herders lace their dead livestock with to poison the cats in retaliation for preying on their livestock.

Kora was declared a national park in 1990 soon after George's death.

Reviving Kora

Mark Cheruiyot at 34 is the senior warden at Kora. It was his idea to commemorate George's anniversary to attract visitors to the park.

"I did not know much about George before I got here but when I started reading on

him, I became more interested. George was committed to his work. He is a role model for us in that whatever field we are in, we must work with passion."

"The annual celebration in honor of George Adamson is to remind ourselves of what George Adamson and others have done at Kora and to continue with their dreams," says Cheruiyot

In 1970, George raised a lion called Christian brought from England. The video of the reunion of Christian and his owners gained about 5 million viewers on Youtube.

Fact file

Kora National Park, 1,787 square kilometers. With the elephants coming back it will open the scrub for the rest of the wildlife. There are beautiful campsites.

Contact Mark Cheruiyot on markcheru@kws.go.ke for bookings.

Or stay next door in Meru National Park. The 870-square-kilometer park has 28 white rhinos and 48 black rhinos and is teeming with wildlife. There are campsites, self catering bandas and lodges log on www.kws.go.ke or reservations@kws.go.ke



Tana River flowing through Kora National Park

www.georgeadamson.org

Endangered &

Birds of Kenya

By Fleur Ng'weno,
Kenya's leading birder

The World Conservation Union, IUCN, publishes a list each year of birds threatened with extinction - the Red List. A few of these endangered birds are found in Kenya. Among them are Clarke's Weaver and Sharpe's Longclaw.

Endangered birds

Clarke's Weaver

Clarke's Weavers are yellow and black in colour, like many other weaverbirds. They live in coastal forests, however, not in farmland. They probably weave a nest like other weaverbirds; we don't know, because no-one has seen their nests.

Clarke's Weavers have only been seen in **two** places on Earth! These are **Arabuko-Sokoke Forest and Dakatcha Woodland**, both near Malindi in Coast Province. Clarke's Weavers travel through the forests in flocks, feeding on insects and wild fruits.

This bird is part of Kenya's heritage, **found only in Kenya**. To save it from extinction, we need to conserve and protect Arabuko-Sokoke Forest and Dakatcha Woodland.



Clarke's weaver sub-adult male by Steve Garvie

Sharpe's Longclaw



Sharpe's longclaw by Peter Usher

Sharpe's Longclaws live in the highland grasslands of Kenya -nowhere else on Earth. They are small birds, the colour of dry grass on the back, and yellow below with black streaks. They live mainly on the ground, hunting for insects in the grass.

To survive, Sharpe's Longclaws need highland grassland with clumps of grass, called tussocks. The birds nest in the tussocks and feed among them.

Many farmers plough up tussock grassland to plant wheat, pasture grass or other crops. **To save Sharpe's Longclaw, farmers need to leave some land as tussock grassland.** Cattle and sheep feed on the grass without harming the endangered birds.

& Common

Common birds

African Pied Wagtail

The name tells us something about the bird: It wags its tail up and down as it walks; it is pied, that is, black and white in colour; and it lives in Africa. African Pied Wagtails are seen in cities and homesteads, and on the shores of ponds, lakes or the ocean.

Many people tell stories about this common bird. Do you know any of the stories?

African Pied Wagtails feed on insects, especially insects near water. Wagging their tail helps wagtails to keep their balance on slippery rocks in streams.



African pied wagtail by Peter Usher

Village Weaver

Village Weavers may be seen in cities, towns and villages. The males are **bright yellow birds** with a **black head** and **red eyes**. The females are whitish and yellowish in colour.

Village Weavers usually nest in groups, called colonies. They often build nests in tall trees in market centres and school compounds. The males tear off strips of palm and banana leaves, and use these to weave a strong, light nest. Then males sing and display to attract the females.

Village Weavers feed on insects, grass seeds and fruits. They feed insects to their young, who need the protein to grow.



Village weaver by Peter Usher

alien

By Rupi Mangat with Arne Witt from CABI

Alien or invasive plants are becoming a dangerous problem and we need to get rid of them. Here are some invasive plants for you to watch out for.

A Parthenium Problem

It looks like an ordinary plant with tiny white flowers. Yet parthenium the plant has the potential to **destroy** Kenya's agricultural yields in some crops by up to **40 percent**, reduce pasture production by up to 90 percent and cause injury to human health. Unfortunately it's not the only invasive plant in the 'alien alley' - there are more and spreading like wild fire

Parthenium originates from Central and South America. It's a weed but because it has an array of local insects that forage on it in its homeland, the plant is kept in check. On new continents where the climate is similar and with no insects to feed on the weed, it's unstoppable.

In the last five years this weed has exploded in Kenya, and is now common along the edges of Nairobi National Park, Mlolongo and the Athi plains. It's thought to have come into Africa on the route of food aid brought in by foreign agencies in war torn and drought stricken countries. It was first recorded in Ethiopia in the 1980s and now it's in Uganda, Tanzania, Swaziland, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Somalia and South Africa. During times of drought Kenya is one of the largest importers of food aid in Africa.



Boys standing in field invaded by parthenium - Pic by Arne Witt

It is a seed contaminant and grows on farmed land including wheat and maize fields. Often, when the grain is harvested, so are the miniscule seeds of parthenium which are then transported with the grain to other regions. A single mature plant can produce **25,000 seeds** and a plant matures in a month and can survive for years. The seeds, like those of the water hyacinth lie in the soil for years till the conditions are right for them to germinate.

The plant is allelopathic which means it releases chemicals into the soil that prevents other plants from growing there.

Even livestock find parthenium distasteful and won't eat it save for when drought is

alley

at its very worst. Livestock can die if they eat large amounts of the plant and when nanny goats browse the flowers their meat and milk tastes totally disgusting.

Dependent on wind or waters for natural dispersal today it is dispersed by another method - motor vehicles. The seeds are caught in the car radiators and drop off along roads. In South Africa, parthenium is where vehicles routinely drop off passengers and cars are washed.

In some places like Ethiopia, it may be driving the Archer's lark - a rare endemic bird into extinction because it has invaded its territory. In India, in some rural communities it has driven farmers to suicide because the liquid from the noxious plant blisters the skin rendering the worker unable to work. In some incidents it is known to induce breathing difficulties in humans.

The Kenyan government has declared parthenium a noxious weed in the Government Gazette of April 2010.

It's important to develop systems by educating farmers and the public about invasive plants. It's cheaper to eliminate them at the very beginning than having to deal with them once they are established.

Chromolaena

Another Alien In Kenya



a new weed coming in from West Africa is chromolaena, which has traveled across the belt of Africa - Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Uganda, and into Kenya. Initially from the Caribbean islands, the shrub with muave flowers was probably introduced as an ornamental plant or other purposes. One mature plant can produce one million seeds per annum, making it a weed with a supersonic ability to spread.

According to the researcher, the weed is found around the edges of Lake Victoria in Kenya and Tanzania. It reduces the carrying capacity of the land by 150 percent, thus turning it into a 'green desert' bare of any other species.

Prosopis juliflora - 'Mathenge'

Introduced by a food agency to combat desertification, the South American plant quickly became a pest and in competition with the flora and fauna. It's a very thirsty plant and hence lowers the water-table in the dry regions.



Prosopis plant
by Arne Witt



Prosopis pods
by Arne Witt

The plant has forced local nomads to move 50 to 60 kilometres away. It has also made the goats toothless because they chew the pods.

Capacity Building Workshop



By Moses Katumbi - WCK Kitui

Today's youngsters are tomorrow's leaders. WCK believes that young people are strong advocates for environmental conservation if we are to conserve our biodiversity. A two-day workshop in August was organized by WCK and funded by WWF (The World Wide Fund for Nature Conservation) at the Kitui Agricultural Training Centre.

Twenty participants from four youth groups within the larger Kitui district attended. The groups do many conservation projects but few know about them because they omit the aspect of advocacy in their work.

The Workshop focused on:

- building capacity of youngsters in environmental advocacy
- increasing their participation in conservation
- training them to become advocates of change in the community

Issues such as arid lands resources, key environmental issues, why carry out advocacy, methods and tools of advocacy and advocacy strategy plans were tackled in the workshop. The participants were also given a case study of the Green Africa Foundation's advocacy work.

In the group discussion, participants identified key environmental issues in the district such as sand harvesting, charcoal production, poaching and waste management. They ana-

lyzed ways of advocacy such as public education, awareness creation/ sensitization, lobbying and mobilization for mass action. The participants were encouraged to advocate for change within the community on sustainable management of natural resources. A follow up of the workshop to assess the impact will be done.

The workshop was facilitated by Eric Deche, Moses Katumbi and Gabriel Ngale. We thank WWF- KCO for funding it.

MEU in Tinderet, Songhor and Nandi Hills in Western Region

By Philip Kirui

From 14th to 17th September 2010, Moses Tarus, Francis Omondi and I representing WCK Lake Victoria Environmental Education Centre in Kisumu visited schools in Tinderet and Songhor.

Our aim was to

- Create awareness about WCK.
- Increase WCK membership.
- Address environmental challenges in the area.

Nandi hills is a water catchment area for Lake Victoria.

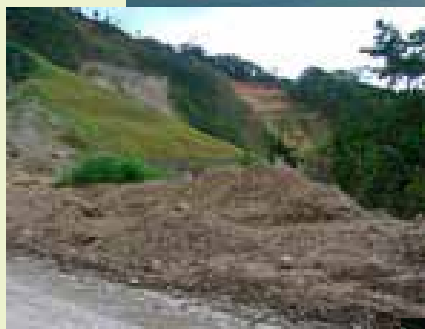
However it is facing several environmental challenges such as reduction in forest cover in Tinderet forest which is an extension of the Mau east forest. People continue with deforestation and poor farming methods on the slopes of the Nandi escarpment leading to soil erosion.

At the schools, we discussed the environmental issues affecting the region. The teachers and pupils acknowledged that the ongoing heavy rain in the region is caused by changes in the environment. It has caused flooding and landslides in the area. They gave an example of children killed by a land slide in one of the hills this year. River Ainapng'etuny (lion river meaning there were lions here before) one of a tributary of River Nyando broke its banks and the floods caused a lot of damage to the crops and damaged the roads in August.

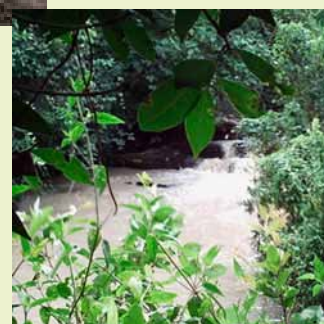
The schools are planting trees and educating the communities on the need to adapt good farming practices to stop soil erosion. A student at St. Mary's Tach Asis Girls Secondary School could not believe that **the soil from the area can reach Lake Victoria through River Nyando.**



Lake Victoria



Sand harvesting in Nandi Hills



River and forest in Nandi Hills

WCK clubs will start tree nurseries to provide seedlings to the communities to plant along the riverbanks to stop soil erosion and to protect the rivers and other water sources from pollution.

These schools enjoy a good supply of tap water coming from the Tinderet forest through the force of gravity. I told them they are lucky but should use water wisely. At Kamelilo primary school, a tap was running when we arrived. On asking the head teacher, he said it was faulty. Being a serious issue, we discussed it. We showed the pupils and teachers the film *“Running Dry”* showing how many people in Kenya struggle for days to find water while others waste it. It drove the message home and the school arranged for a new tap immediately.

People need to appreciate their natural resources and stop biodiversity loss. After the video show, the pupils collected litter that was everywhere in the school compound and took it to the litter pit. Our visit to the school was timely in creating awareness which led to action. The replaced tap stopped water wastage. Kenya is a water-stressed country. We must save every drop.

Activity pages

This is a fun activity to get you asking questions like a researcher or journalist so that one day you can write articles to create awareness leading to positive action for a better world.



Lion cub

Below is a list of endangered animals. You can add more. Pretend that you are a researcher or a journalist and are interviewing an animal from the list

Lowland gorilla, Silver backed gorilla, lion, cheetah, gray wolf, black rhino, white rhino, orangutan, Rothschild giraffe, Grevy's zebra, mandrill, blue whale, lemur, Asian elephant, vulture

Endangered interview

Interviewer: We are here today with
..an endangered animal. Please tell the audience what you look like.

Animal.....

Interviewer: Where do you live?

Animal.....

Interviewer: what do you do there?

Animal.....

Interviewer: What do you like to eat?

Animal.....

Interviewer: Why are you endangered?

Animal.....



Lemur

Interviewer: What is being done to help you and your kind?

Animal.....

Interviewer? What would you like people to know about you?

Animal.....



Vulture

When you have finished you can present this interview - read it with a friend in front of your class and discuss how the animal can be saved.

Rock Owl Paperweights



You've heard of owls like the barn owl, and the snowy owl. Would your room make a good habitat for them? Probably not! Owls are nocturnal birds of prey that need plenty of space to hunt rodents and other small animals. Hunting at night is what owls do better than any other bird.

Here are some ideas for making an owl that could live in your room-the rock owl



What you need

- o 1 cleaned rock that you think will make a good owl shape. Your owl can stand up if the rock you find has a flat part. We will show you one that stands up, and one that doesn't.)
- o Pencil or fine-tip for sketching.
- o Newspaper to protect your work surface.
- o 4 colors of acrylic paint: white, black, brown, and gold.
- o Small paint palette (a paper plate will work).
- o Brushes: small and medium round, and large.



3. Use the medium brush to paint the front, back, and sides of your owl: face-white; head-black; chest-brown; wings-gold; back-brown. Allow your owl to dry as you paint these areas.



What you do



1. Use the largest brush to paint the rock white. Paint one side and let it dry. Paint the other side and let it dry. (Optional: you can tint your white paint light yellow by adding some gold paint.)
2. Use a pencil to draw a head and wings on the front of your owl. Make a face with large, round eyes and a sharp, V-shaped beak. Draw the back of your owl's head and wings. Draw along the sides of the owl to connect the back and front of the head and wings. Don't worry about making your drawing perfect!

4. Use the small round brush and small amount of paint to add details. Paint the eyes gold with black pupils and white accents. Paint the beak black. Add feathery textures with white, black, gold, and brown. Paint the front, sides, back, top, and bottom. You can look at photographs of owls to get ideas. Owls have facial discs with feathers that radiate out from the eyes like the spokes of a wheel. Contour feathers are short; flight feathers are long.

Add more detail to complete your rock owl.
Courtesy: 2010 Zoological Society of San Diego

“Ngatye” na “Lumbwi” *Carriers of God's Message*

When we were children, our parents and grand-parents told us stories.

One day, my older brother, Mwalaa killed “*Lumbwi*” the chameleon.

We decided to report him for having killed the chameleon.

“Never again will you kill a chameleon!” my uncle shouted angrily. He made us sit down to tell us why.

So, after dinner on a clear moonlight night, our uncle told us the story of the graceful chameleon.

“God created all animals on earth and then created the first man and woman. After all the creation, God sent two animals to man with two messages,” started uncle.

The first message was given to “*Lumbwi*” the chameleon. *Lumbwi* was to forward the message to man.

“The message said “*Kuvyala nahuvyalane na Kufwa husifwe*” (in Chonyi language) meaning “*Man shall give birth and will not die*”.



Lumbwi the chameleon

The other message was for “*Ngatye*” the lizard. It was “*Kuvyala nahuvyalane na Kufwa Hufwe*”, meaning. “***Man shall give birth but will also die***”.

Knowing that the chameleon is slow, God sent him before the lizard.

The chameleon started to look for man so that he could deliver the message.

A day later, God sent *Ngatye*. *Ngatye* quickly ran towards man but found that *Lumbwi* was about to reach man. *Ngatye* overtook him and delivered his message first.

It is for this reason that all human beings must die.

Ngatye being the bearer of this bad message is always on the run whenever he sees man. *Lumbwi* on the other hand is

always slow and does not fear man because he remains the bearer of the good news - though he has yet to deliver it.

Our uncle continued. “When *Lumbwi* delivers this message, then people will not die. So please do not kill the chameleon because we do not know which one has the message.

“Is there anyone who wants to live forever?” asked uncle.

“Yes,” we shouted.

From then on, we would try to get close to the chameleons to see if they would give us the message.

Even today, we leave *Lumbwi*, alone. And for *Ngatye*, he's always running from people.

As children, the story made us like chameleons. Now as a grown up, I appreciate that these were important stories on conservation helping to save our biodiversity.



Ngatye the lizard



**Centre for Tourism Training & Research
(Wildlife Clubs of Kenya)**



Moi University

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES IN HOSPITALITY AND WILDLIFE SECTOR

Applications are invited for the following courses at WCK's **CENTRE FOR TOURISM TRAINING & RESEARCH (CTTR)** at Langata, Nairobi. The courses are offered in collaboration with Moi University School of Natural Resources Management.

Course	Entry requirements	Duration	Start Date Annually
1. Certificate Course in Tour Guiding and Administration	❖ O level pass KCE Division II or KCSE C- (Minus), good passes in English, Swahili, History, Geography, Mathematics and Biology.	3 SEMESTERS ❖ 2 teaching semesters ❖ 1 Attachment semester	January / May
2. Bridging course for Certificate in Tour Guiding & Administration	❖ Applicants who DO NOT qualify for direct entry to the Certificate course. Must have a minimum of D+ (Plus) or equivalent in KCSE	1 SEMESTER	September / January
3. Diploma in Tourism and Wildlife Management (TWM)	❖ A minimum of C- (Minus) in KCSE and a Distinction or Credit from the Certificate course from CTTR or a Diploma in a relevant field from a recognised institution.	6 SEMESTERS including 3 Semesters from certificate course	January / May

Applications are invited for the following courses at **WCK's CTTR** at Langata, Nairobi. This is a modular programme offered in collaboration with **Moi University's** School of Business & Economics, Department of Hotel & hospitality. Attachment is guaranteed with a **Five Star** Group of Hotels.

Course	Entry requirements	Duration	Start Date
4. Diploma in Hotel and Restaurant management (HRM)	❖ Minimum entry of KCSE C – (Minus) or its equivalent	6 SEMESTERS consisting of: *5 teaching semesters *1 Practical semesters	January / May / September
5. Bridging course for Diploma in Hotel & Restaurant Management	❖ Applicants who DO NOT qualify for direct entry to the Diploma in HRM. Must have a minimum of D+ (Plus) or equivalent in KCSE.	1 SEMESTER	January / May / September

- Application forms are available at a non-refundable fee of Ksh 1000 at WCK headquarters (off Langata Road near Bomas of Kenya).
- Applicants from upcountry should send a money order of Ksh 1000 in favour of Wildlife Clubs of Kenya for application forms to be posted to them and **clearly indicate the course they are applying for.**
- **ALL** applications must be received **At least 2 weeks** before commencement of any of the programs.
- The application fee does not guarantee admission to CTTR.

All applications be sent to:-

**HEAD OF TRAINING,
Centre for Tourism Training & Research (CTTR),
Wildlife Clubs of Kenya,**

P.O. Box 20184, 00200 NAIROBI. Tel 0208067644 ; Mobile : 0724 656667; Fax 891906

Email: cttr@wildlifeclubsofkenya.org

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