



# A ROCHA KENYA'S NEWS LETTER

Nature conserved, people transformed

ISSUE 03 —August 2014

## MWAMBA FIELD STUDY CENTRE

Mwamba Field Study Centre provides simple and pleasant, friendly and relaxed full-board accommodation for all interested visitors, including researchers and conservationists, and offers opportunities for volunteers to get involved. There are facilities for small workshops and seminars. Visitors can enjoy the dazzling white sands of Watamu's world-renowned beach and National Marine Park.



Infrastructure at Mwamba



Guest Rooms



Dinner time



Beach

## MIDA CREEK BOARD-WALK & BIRD HIDE

Funds collected from the amazing Mida creek boardwalk and bird hide together with the Gede Ruins tree platform are used to pay for the Scholarships offered to Children from poor families around Mida Creek and Arabuko-Sokoke Forest through the ASSETS Bursary Scheme.



Mida creek Boardwalk



Gede Ruins Tree Platform

## SUPPORT US!

### DONATE

Support A Rocha Kenya Programs on:

[www.arocha.org](http://www.arocha.org)

Support our ASSETS Scholarships Program by making a donation on:

[https://my.give.net/arochakenya\\_assets](https://my.give.net/arochakenya_assets)

### HOLIDAY

Stay at Mwamba Field Study Centre, Book with us on:

[mwamba@arocha.org](mailto:mwamba@arocha.org)

### FUN-TIME

Visit our Eco-facilities:-

Karara Nature Trails

Mida Creek Board-walk

Gede Ruins Tree Platform

### VOLUNTEER

Volunteer with us, apply at

[kenya@arocha.org](mailto:kenya@arocha.org)

### FRIENDS of ARK

Become a Friend of ARK, Registration fee—Ksh 500

Our Blogs

<http://assets.wildlifedirect.org/>

<http://arochakenya.wildlifedirect.org/>

Face book : A Rocha Kenya

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Lesser Black Backed Gull

In January we reported on the start of the **Kenya Bird Map** an ambitious project that A Rocha Kenya has been instrumental in getting started that is mapping the current distribution of Kenya's bird species and comparing it with the atlas of birds that was carried out in the late '70s and early '80s. The project has continued to grow and whilst it has been a slow start to get going, the website is now functional to the level that it is possible to upload data and already over 2,600 records from 54 cards covering 37 atlas squares (known as 'pentads' as they are 5 minutes of latitude by 5 minutes of longitude in size).

However there are another c.8,960 pentads still to be covered – so there is plenty more work to be done!

**Did you know that Kenya is ranked second in the whole of Africa in bird biodiversity with 1153 bird species?**



Crab plovers

## 27 NEW STUDENTS JOIN ASSETS



ASSETS Beneficiaries

We do thank the Lord for providing for us in countless astonishing ways! Secondly you; each one of you for your noble contribution in sustaining and rescuing the ASSETS project, restoring hope for the community and for nature!

Recently the ASSETS committee held the final assessment meeting and 27 new students were admitted into the scheme. As it stands now, 501 students have received bursaries through the ASSETS scheme, 378 students successfully cleared their secondary school while current beneficiaries add up to 123. It is indeed quite encouraging to us that the number of our “ambassadors” out there is increasing!

We do hope and pray that the Lord will continue providing for us so that we can reach out to even more members of the community here impacting their lives in as many ways possible.

**ASSETS Program** is a well-targeted sustainable development programme, that provides secondary school scholarships, meeting the economic and social needs of the local community, whilst promoting the conservation of two of Africa's most important ecosystems in the Kenyan North Coast.

## PROTECTING MARINE ECOSYSTEMS



Peter A Rocha Kenya's Marine Researcher Carrying out a survey

As a Christian organization in conservation we believe we are called by God to take care of his creation (Gen 1:26). We thrive to promote sustainable use and care for God's creation, in collaboration with Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS) we aim to create awareness to beach operators and tourists to adopt environmental friendly practices in marine ecosystems.

A Rocha Kenya's marine work is carried out in the rocky intertidal platforms among other areas in and around Watamu Marine National Park. Rocky intertidal platforms are uniquely rich and abundant with numerous species of fish, echinoderms, corals, sea grass and sea weeds. It is amazing how these habitats are connected to the other adjacent and equally important habitats such as coral reefs. Their role in the provision of recreational, economic and ecological roles cannot therefore be overlooked.

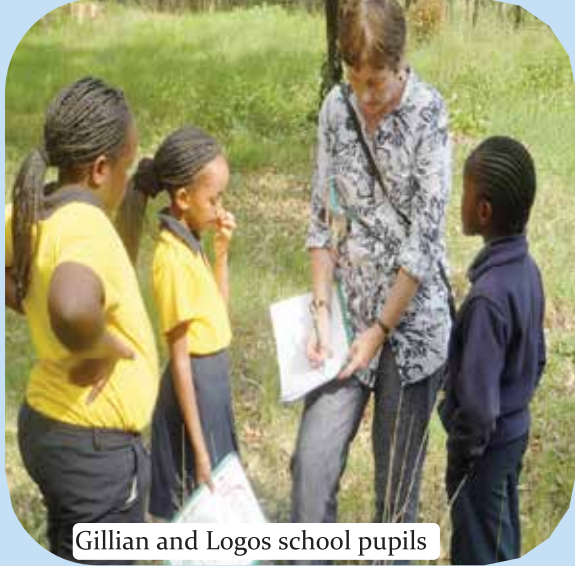
Recently A Rocha Kenya marine team carried out a survey to study the various tourist activities carried out and their impacts on these habitats. Interaction of anthropogenic activities and the intertidal components has an impact on the well-being of these areas. It was evident that there are significant levels of tourist activities being carried out in these areas some of which have detrimental effects on their integrity. Activities such as pooling sea stars in a single pool, poking puffer fish, feeding moray eels and trampling as well as litter disposal in these areas are not environmentally friendly.

For long term well-being of these areas and their continued provision of both ecological and recreational services, we all need to care for them by ensuring that we don't engage in activities that cause harm to them and we take time to redeem part of those already disturbed. Take the initiative today; pick litter you see on the rock pools. Don't poke clams and don't take beautiful creatures as souvenirs. Let's take care of God's creation.

# REACHING OUT TO YOUNG SCHOLARS

A Rocha Kenya recognizes the importance of making a real investment in environmental education and outdoor learning, and is therefore carrying out environmental education in various schools in Nairobi and Watamu.

Gillian Raven (A Rocha Kenya's Environmental Education officer) got together with pupils from Logos Christian school in Nairobi for an Environmental class, with the main topic tackled being forests in Kenya and their importance. With both theory and practical learning employed, the pupils got to learn about the different types of forests found across Kenya and their importance as well. They got to learn how to measure a tree diameter which most of them found very interesting.



Gillian and Logos school pupils

In Watamu, The A Rocha Kenya Environmental team made a visit to Mekatilili School, with the day's environmental education theme being "ecosystem is a complex set of relationship among them living resources, habitats and residents of an area". The pupils got to learn



class presentation and discussion at Mekatilili School

the importance of being good stewards of the Earth's fragile ecosystems and precious resources, and the role of each one of us in preserving them. If we are to go on living together on this earth, we must all be responsible for it. Over the last 3 months, A Rocha Kenya has carried out 21 of such activities with schools.

# DAKATCHA COMMUNITIES IN ACTION!

Community participation is crucial in conservation. It is for this reason that A Rocha Kenya is training farmers in various villages in Dakatcha woodlands, North coast on how to Farm God's Way (FGW). In this Tearfund UK supported project, A Rocha Kenya is partnering with the Anglican Development Services, Pwani. After a chain of trainings over the last six months, the farmers have now embarked on preparations for the next growing season which comes later in the year. The farmers are so excited with the method that they have formed Mwerya working system in Mlunguni and Boyani villages. In this system farmers work in groups in their farms. This has in turn resulted in increased interest on Farming God's Way hence, prompting the need to train more farmers. "Farming is now enjoyable, our forests will also come alive again!" said Jacob, one of the farmers.



Mwerya action group