



## THE LATEST ON ARK.

The past months have seen some further additions to ARK staff and we welcomed Silas Ekesa, to the Research team as Research Assistant and Ayoti Simms to the team to publicise & tell the story of our community programme, ASSETS, through our ARK Facebook page, blogs and newsletters.

One of the more major news items is the recent (March 2013) discovery of the Clarke's Weaver nesting site in a tiny swamp in Dakatcha to the north of Malindi by Fleur Ng'weno, a volunteer with our partner NatureKenya, and members of the Dakatcha Woodlands Conservation Group.

Our new Marine Conservation Programme, a joint project with Kenya Wildlife Service and now a year old, has grown and consolidated. Marine Director, Dr Bob Sluka, spent time with his family at Mwamba in Jan/Feb this year and spent many hours in the water and in tide pools looking for sponges and corals. Bob discovered that the most recent publication on marine polychetes (worms) for Kenya was 1904 – over 100 years ago! - demonstrating the need to carry out thorough surveys so that we know in full what animals and plants we have present in the marine park.

Throughout we are grateful to God for his sustaining and for opening up new opportunities. It has not been easy what with national elections, thankfully in the end peaceful, but all the same scaring off most tourists meaning our income was drastically cut. If you already support us – thank you! And if not, please consider doing so – most easily through the online donation option on the arocha.org website.

*Colin Jackson*



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## ARK'S VOYAGE

# AMANI SUNBIRD SURVEY.

This year's survey season for the sunbird started at the beginning of March, Amani Sunbirds are found only in the *Brachystegia* woodland in Arabuko-Sokoke, of which there are 77 km<sup>2</sup>.

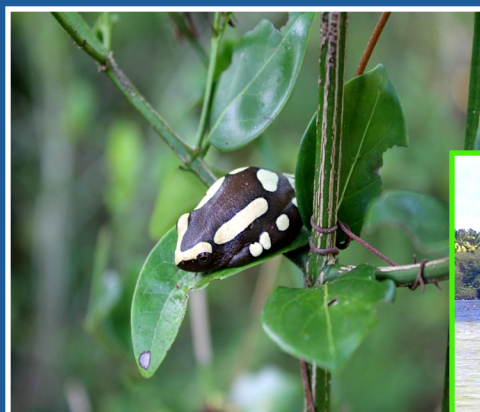
The aim of this particular study is to get an estimate of the population size of this beautiful little sunbird. We are repeating a study which was first done in 1999, a second time in 2011, and now we will be doing it a third time this year,

The survey season has been full of ups and downs; some surveys we walked 2 kilometers and saw 11 sunbirds, and others we walked 10.5 kilometers and saw 0 birds. Some surveys we were rained on and others we were completely baked by the heat and the humidity. The one consistent thing about the study was that it was a lot of work.

Hitting our target mark of 70 sunbird observations was something to celebrate, that's for sure! The wonderful thing about working the forest is that even if we walk a transect where we don't find any Amani Sunbirds, there is always something interesting to see in the forest if you keep your eyes open. We came across a beautiful Flap-necked Chameleon, as well as a very cute Argus Reed Frog

The surveys will be repeated again during in the non-breeding season, in order to see if there is any different in our population numbers based on time of the year. So far, the results which we have seen have been encouraging. It looks like the population size has remained stable; maybe even having increased between 1999 and 2011, and hopefully the data we've gathered this year will continue to follow that trend.

Andrew Kinzer.



## Reaching out to the fishing community.

Many communities around Mwamba, our field studies centre in Watamu, are dependent to a large extent on fish and fishing for food and income.

So, over the past several months, we on the marine team have been working to learn how, it may be worthwhile for A Rocha Kenya to become more involved in coastal fisheries conservation in the Watamu area.

To this end, we have been reviewing the published scientific literature regarding Kenya's coastal fisheries, meeting with larger-scale Kenya fisheries agencies, and talking with local fishers and organizations in the Watamu area.

Combined with our continuing coral reef and rock pool ecology research, this work with local fishermen and women may be an incredible way to both learn more about God's amazing marine creation and work to redeem the way we as people relate to this part of His world.

Stay tuned for further updates as we continue to think and pray about this new potential project!

Paul Simonins



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## A TREASURE IN THE CITY

Cities world over are known to be biodiversity deserts. They are synonymous with tall buildings, roads, motor vehicles and a sea of humanity; so is Nairobi. The amazing thing about Nairobi, however, is its ability to combine the hustle and bustle that is characteristic of a rapidly growing city in Africa with rare biodiversity. I remember once sitting with a friend at a restaurant garden in Hurlingham when we saw a total of nine different bird species at a go on a tree nearby. My friend who was new to Nairobi could not believe his eyes.

These are the treasures of Nairobi city! The metropolis still seems to have these small pockets of ecosystems which have over the years acted as reservoirs for huge biodiversity. It is however sad to note that new 'development' is threatening to erase this rich heritage.

### Field study

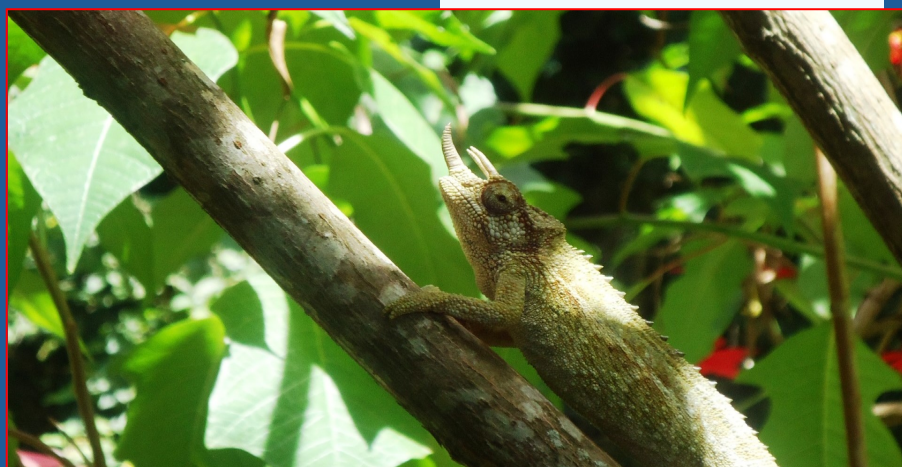
A Rocha Kenya is taking the bull by its horns. We have made a deliberate decision to not only keep a 14 acre piece of property in Karen intact but also to enrich and manage it in such a way that it will be home to diverse species of birds, butterflies and other flora and fauna. The idea is to develop the

site into a field study centre which will host community members, churches, schools and institutions of higher learning for studies and hands-on experience.

*To be continued.....IN OUR NEXT ISSUE.*

**Raphael Magambo.**

Karara farm is A Rocha Kenya's 15 acre piece of land just a few hundred meters from Karen shopping center on Ngong Road. Karara is a serene land that is mostly forest with different butterfly species, birds, plants, beautiful flowers and a few monkeys. Currently, we have an office on the property a few members of our team



## Mwamba Goes Fireless Cooker.

The ever increasing cost of living especially the price for fuel energy has become a big headache both domestically and industrially. A Rocha Kenya over the years has been advocating for sustainable use of resources including mitigation measures such as employing alternative technology.

Sometimes big problems such as ways to reduce cost of cooking, environmental degradation etc can be addressed by application of simple yet effective technology – one such is fireless cooker. It is a simple technology where partially cooked food is put in a special insulated basket that will allow the food to cook with its own heat. The heat loss is tremendously reduced and instead it is retained in the designed fireless cooker.

We decided to fully utilize the fireless cooker technology in at the Mwamba kitchen and the results have been amazing. Not only have we saved on the cooking gas but also reduced carbon emission into the environment.

**Henry Kigen**





## A Rocha Kenya's Activities:

### Environmental Education:

A Rocha Kenya seeks to promote environmental education and implement practical conservation initiatives by working with schools, environmental groups, communities and churches.  
<http://www.arocha.org/ke-en/work/enveducation.html>

### Community Conservation:

ASSETS is a well-targeted sustainable development programme. That provides secondary school scholarships, therefore ASSETS meets the economic and social needs of the local community, whilst promoting the conservation of two of Africa's most important ecosystems.

### Field Study Center:

Mwamba Field Study Centre provides simple but pleasant, friendly and relaxed full-board accommodation for anyone wanting to visit the area. We welcome all and anyone who is interested in either a holiday on one of the world's top beach destinations or as a base for exploring or studying the amazingly diverse habitats, flora and fauna that exist in and around Watamu.

### Research and Monitoring:

By encouraging, training and resourcing a small but growing number of Kenyan field workers, A Rocha Kenya is making a unique contribution to the conservation of the country's natural resources. Skilled amateur observers as well as conservation professionals are helping to collect vital data about national biodiversity.

## PLEASE DONATE!

Please support our any of our work by making a donation on: [www.arocha.org](http://www.arocha.org)

Or support ASSETS by making a donation on

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



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*Christians in Conservation*

**ARK'S VOYAGE.**

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### A Rocha Kenya: Nairobi Address:

Karen Opposite Windy Ridge Road,  
Next to Karen Surgery.

P.O BOX 24630,  
Nairobi, 0502,  
Kenya.

Email: [Kenya@arocha.org](mailto:Kenya@arocha.org)

### Watamu Address.

PLOT 28,  
Beach Road, Wa-  
tamu.

P.O BOX 383,  
Watamu, 80202,  
Kenya.

Tel: +254202335865  
[www.arocha.org/ke-en](http://www.arocha.org/ke-en)