



# AROCHA KENYA'S NEWSLETTER

Nature conserved people transformed

ISSUE 06– August 2015

## Marine conservation through rock pooling



Rock pools (small pools of water at the beach area left during the low tide) are sites for unique, distinct and diverse marine life. Rock pools within the Watamu Marine National Park are bountiful with marine life such as wrasses, small damselfish, hairy crab (*Pilumnus versipitio*), old moray eels, starfish, brittle stars, sea cucumbers, nudibranchs, colourful cowries and sea urchins.



However, rock pools are also facing human threats. This is because they are easily accessible to human beings. Various activities such as tourism and boat anchorage can cause serious damage to the marine life that resides in rock pools.

Rock pooling is not only fun but it is a means to knowledge and better understanding of other almost similar marine habitats such as coral reefs. The A Rocha Kenya marine team braves hours of study and data collection to better understand these amazing features which are also important habitats for breeding, feeding and resting of numerous marine species.

The team has recently carried out baseline surveys to identify biota found in the rock pools at Watamu Marine National Park. It is engaged in research of a particular endemic coral species that is evolutionary distinct but globally rare and also relatively populous in the rock pools within Watamu Marine National Park.

“Understanding population structure and associated habitat characteristics of such marginal corals will possibly give an insight on if and how corals are likely to adapt to changing global conditions. It will also encourage further studies of the survival of corals and resilience of coral reefs over time and inform towards better management of coral reefs and marine ecosystems. We should therefore be careful when carrying out activities close at the rock pools. This is to ensure that these habitats

continue to provide their ecological service and most importantly care for them as God's creation.” Says Peter Musembi, A Rocha Kenya's Marine researcher.



## Meet Doris; The ASSETS beneficiary who gets satisfaction through giving back to her community.



“Were it not for A Rocha Kenya’s ASSETS program, I don’t know how my life would be today,” said Doris Furaha an ASSETS beneficiary who hails from Kahingoni Village in Kilifi County. Despite having passed her Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (K.C.P.E) examinations highly in the year 2010 at Kahingoni Primary School, Doris Furaha’s future seemed bleak. Her parents; who are peasant farmers could barely afford to enrol her in a secondary because of their meagre earnings. The second born in a family of two could only pray for luck to come her way. And lady luck sure did knock on her door when she was selected as an ASSETS beneficiary in the year 2011. She was enrolled at Bahari Girls High School where she obtained a mean grade of B- in last year’s Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (K.C.S.E) examinations.

“Teaching these young boys and girls keeps me busy and helps me avoid bad company but to top it all sharing my knowledge with these young people gives me satisfaction. The sight of me here, is an enough motivation for them to work even more harder despite the challenges they face.” She said at Kahingoni Primary School where she volunteers as an English, Kiswahili, Social Studies and Science teacher. Doris has been a volunteer teacher at Kahingoni primary school since May 2015. As she keeps on equipping these young ones with the knowledge she still holds onto her dream of becoming a clinical officer someday. It is her prayer that she will be able to join the university and study her dream course. ASSETS is a sustainable development programme that provides secondary school scholarships, meeting the socio-economic needs of the society whilst promoting the conservation of two of Africa’s most important ecosystems (Arabuko Sokoke and Mida Creek in the Kenyan North Coast)

## Young people on the global stage



Young People on the Global Stage (YPGS) is a project that brings together schools in the United Kingdom, Germany, Spain, Kenya and Gambia to research on global sustainable issues; biodiversity, forest management, waste management, climate change, food and water, in and around the cities where the schools are located. The schools then try to come up with initiatives to address these issues, which are later proposed to decision makers. A Rocha Kenya began the project towards the end of last year with Lenana School and the students embraced the initiative with huge enthusiasm. On 8th November last year, the Environment Club organized a clean-up event in Ng’ando Estate which borders their school. Early this year Karen C Secondary School joined Lenana School and from the 27th to 30th of April this year, we did an official launch of Young People on a Global Stage project with the Year 9 students at Braeburn International School.

We introduced the five issues and allowed the students to get into groups and formulate research questions and hypotheses. They then researched on the topics and presented their findings on the last day of the launch. The program is cross-curricular involving Geography, History, English, Science, Arts, and Music among other subjects. Students come up with all sorts of presentations including Power Point, photography, artwork, animations, poetry, and songs among other exhibitions. Student groups are carrying on with the project and we anticipate with great discoveries. It is indeed a great thing to see young people become more enthusiastic in global environmental issues in bid to make the planet more habitable.



### FUN BY THE BEACH SIDE

Thursday 27th, August 2015

Join us for a grand reunion event at Mwamba field Study Centre, Watamu and enjoy bird ringing, boardwalking, snorkelling and bird watching.

Charges: 7500 inclusive of full board accommodation at Mwamba, entry fees to Mida Creek, Gede Ruins and Watamu Marine National Park as well as transportation costs to these places.

For more details, E-mail: [mwamba.ark@gmail.com](mailto:mwamba.ark@gmail.com) or Call + 254 (0) 202 335 865



## 2015 Summer Field Course



Every year, A Rocha Kenya offers individuals an amazing opportunity to experience how Conservation and Christianity go together through practical involvement in our work; The Summer Field Course. Here we share testimonies from two participants of the course this year ; Mr. Cyrus Hester from The United States and Ms Rebecca Eastwood from The United Kingdom .

“If you’re reading this, chances are you’re wondering whether the A Rocha Kenya Field Course is right for you. Is it worth it? What will I be doing? Is it too long, too far, too short, or too close? I had the same debate once. Alright, maybe more than once. Of course, I can’t tell you how your course will go, but I can tell you how my time has been. Put simply: it has been an exciting, encouraging, and unforgettable experience. And, while I can’t say whether you’ll have the opportunity to watch flamingos burst into flight over the Sabaki River or watch juvenile lion fish swim in a tidal pool or hold a mangrove kingfisher, I can say that you will witness firsthand what caring about communities and conservation can do. The 2015 Field Course took us everywhere from

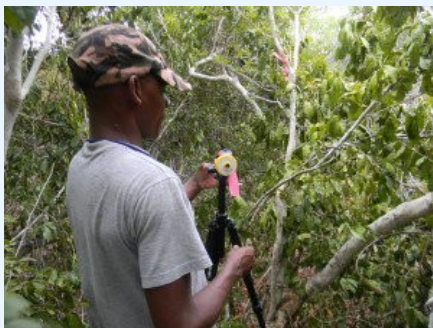
the bumpy roads of Dakatcha to the brittle cliffs of Whale Island and the swaying boardwalk of Mida Creek. As the final days of the 2015 field course tick away, I can’t say how your experience will be. But, I can tell you that this is a beautiful place with inspired, compassionate people who work each day to make a difference for local communities and the environment. I can tell you that I am leaving here richer in memories, hope, and Kiswahili vocabulary. Maybe the same will be true for you someday.” -Cyrus Hester

“I must say it was a great experience to see how A Rocha Kenya is working with local coastal communities to promote sustainability and improving livelihoods.”- Rebecca Eastwood. Read more testimonies at:

- - and <http://assets.wildlifedirect.org/2015/07/20/1998/>

Next year’s Summer Field Course will be in the month of July. Be on the look out!

## Restoring Dakatcha woodlands



Dakatcha Woodland is globally recognized as an Important Bird Area (IBA). It is the only site outside Arabuko-Sokoke forest where the Endangered Clarke’s Weaver bird is known to nest.

A Rocha Kenya continues to empower communities in Dakatcha through Farming God’s Way; a form of conservation agriculture whose principles; agro-forestry, mulching, zero tillage and crop rotation, boost soil fertility and yield. The Farming God’s Way plots established have helped relent the rate at which the woodlands were being cleared for charcoal burning and for pineapple plantations.

The Dakatcha Community Forest Association is one of the groups that A Rocha Kenya is empowering with trainings on conservation of the forest ecosystems. The empowerment is evident as Dakatcha CFA has started collaborating with other Dakatcha conservation enthusiasts; Community Conserved Areas (CCA) members to strengthen their advocacy for the restoration of the woodland ecosystem.

We have just completed a regeneration study in Kiroso Scott Reserve which involved mapping and documenting various vegetation types, ranging from the easily penetrated woodland to the impassable Cynometra thickets. Height and diameter of trunks and canopy competition index or class (the latter involves the percentage dominance of each tree in terms of crown level in relation to insulation reception) is part of the data that was documented. A Rocha Kenya’s presence in Dakatcha is achieving two important goals simultaneously: transforming the communities for food security and conserving the Dakatcha woodland ecosystem.

## In pictures



*Tree planting at Chipande primary school in Kilifi County*



*The de-snaring walk in Arabuko Sokoke forest that saw 15 animal snares removed.*



*Bird monitoring at Mida Creek that saw a total of 202 birds counted.*



*Funds collected from this boardwalk are used as scholarships offered to children from poor families around Mida creek and Arabuko Sokoke Forest through the ASSETS bursary scheme.*





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## Mwamba Field Study Centre

Mwamba Field Study Centre provides simple, pleasant and relaxed full board accommodation for all interested visitors, including researchers and conservationists and offers opportunities for volunteers to get involved. It also offers conference facilities for small workshops and seminars. Be sure to enjoy the dazzling white sands of Watamu's renowned beach and Watamu Marine National Park when you visit Mwamba.



### Welcome aboard

A Rocha Kenya would like to welcome the following individual members on board as Friends of A Rocha Kenya.

1.Sophia Nasieku 2.David Odhuno 3.Noella Luka 4.Sammy Gatere 5.Ciru Gatere  
6.Kiprono Kittyony 7.Michael Bukachi 8.Rebecca Eastwood 9.Ruth Lozi

### ARK Friends scheme

Individual –Kshs.500 per year

Family - Kshs.1000 per year

Institutional - Kshs.2000 per year

Group - Kshs.3000 per year

Corporate - Kshs.5000 per year

### Friends of A Rocha Kenya.

Join/Renew Membership via 

Select payment services

Select buy goods

Enter till number **665950**

Enter your pin

Confirm details and press ok.

## 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

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

Our Blogs

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

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

Face book : A Rocha Kenya

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National Committee of The Netherlands

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