

A STANDARD FOR MARINE RESEARCH? - Colossians 1:10



Haemulidae - (Plectorhinchus gaterinus) Blackspotted Sweetlips

We often don't think that the Bible has something to say about research. Of course, the issue of scientific research isn't explicitly addressed in the Bible. After all, what we call science came to be much later. However, we do know that the Bible can be applied to all aspects of our lives and that includes our vocations. So while there isn't such thing as a Christian transect (a field technique used in much of ecology), the Bible can give us principles to apply to the process of collecting field data.

"That you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

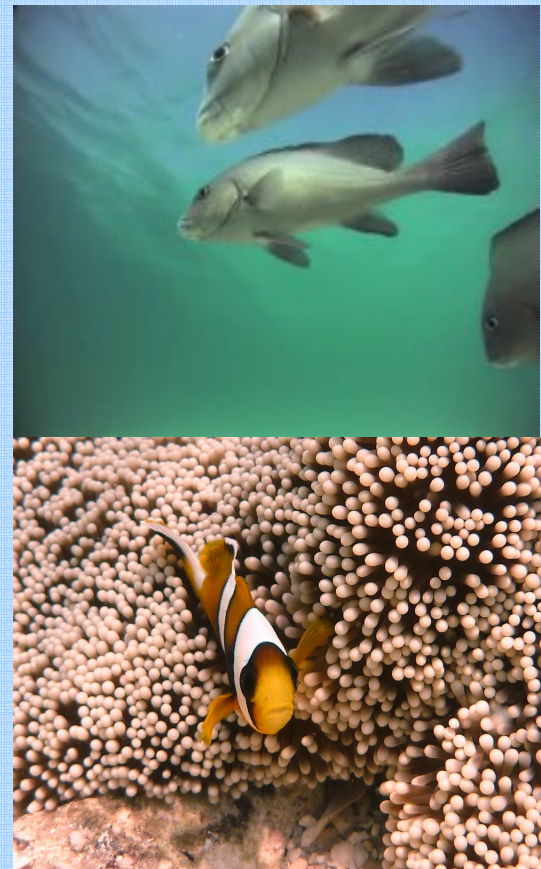
So what does this have to do with research? I think each point is something that I want to aspire to as I set out each day here as I go out and collect data, interact with people, and plan my work. Firstly, Paul prays that they "may walk worthy of the Lord." He is talking about Christ, of course. This statement points to integrity in all we do. We can't just do shoddy re-

search in order to get by, but should aspire to the highest possible standards. We need to do the background work of reading the scientific literature on our topic, know the current field methods, their biases and how to adjust for them. We should feel confident, that to the best of our ability, we have done everything reasonably possible to collect information that reflects what is really there.

Why are we doing this research? Certainly it is great fun to go out onto what has been labeled Africa's second-most beautiful beach, spend the day snorkeling on a reef or meandering through the rock pools. We also love our neighbors' - those who depend on these resources for their livelihoods and our conservation partners whom we want to serve with information that can be used to better protect this beautiful place. But we also want to please God. Our heart's desire is to hear God say - "Well done!" We do all this as unto the Lord, not trying to please people, but the one to whom we are ultimately responsible. As Colossians 3:17 says *"Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."*

God reveals Himself primarily in His word, but Scripture itself teaches us that the world around us points us to God. We see tangible glimpses of His beauty and creativity in the intricate web of life found on a coral reef. I feel His peace sitting contented after a dive, warming in the sun while sitting on the boat gazing out at the Indian Ocean. The list could go on. My research helps me to be "increasing in the knowledge of God" as I learn more about His world.

Robert Sluka, Ph.D.
Director, A Rocha Kenya Marine Conservation and Research Programme



ASSETS Students going snorkeling for the first time ever, to experience life under water

RE-OPENING OF THE ASSETS TREE PLATFORM – at Gedi Ruins

A GIRL WITH A HEART OF GOLD

"Intense love does not measure it just gives" Mother Teresa

"My name is Signe wiklund I'm 14 years old and I have two brothers axel 15 and Einar 12 years old. My mom is Kikki and my dad is Daniel. We live in kungsbacka Sweden!"

We have visited Kenya, Watamu, twice and the last time my mum and dad helped to clean the beach and meet Ayoti and learned about A Rocha Kenya. When my parents came back to the hotel from visiting the A Rocha and I liked that you help family's to farm, children to school and the whole environment! So when someone came from A Rocha Kenya to our hotel Turtle Bay Beach Club that evening I decided that when I get back home to Sweden I wanted to do something to help! So because I love to bake, that is what I do, I will bake and then sell the cakes at my school cafe and the money I get I give to A Rocha! I love to do something to help and I also love to bake! So that great! Thank you A Rocha for helping me help! / Signe Wiklund"

Signe holding a cake for charity



A Happy A Rocha Kenya Team—after opening of the Tree Platform

A Prayer Well Answered!

Eco-tourism has been the main source of funding especially for our community and conservation work. Funds collected from our Eco-facilities have been pivotal in the sustainability of our projects. However breaking down of the Gede Ruins Tree platform was one problem that wrecked our minds in the last quarter of 2013.

Later that same day our staff members Stanley and Daniel set out to meet a couple, adamant supporters of our work, Bill of the Watamu Rotary Club and his wife Cassandra. "Fingers crossed" we waited hoping for the best as they had shown some interest in funding the repair operations.

We could all read the glee in the faces of Stanley and Dan as they drove back into the Mwamba compound (where we are located). Finally The good Lord had answered our prayers and the repair operations had been fully funded by this couple. A big thank you to Bill and Cassandra for standing by us in our time of need. May you find favor in the Lord.

The A Rocha Kenya team, staff, board members, volunteers, ASSETS Beneficiary all came together to celebrate as we re-opened the tree platform on 15th February 2014.

Gede tree platform is now back to full operation.

Gede Ruins Tree Platform



ASSETS Beneficiaries on the Platform

Signe Wiklund is living according to Mother Teresa's words. This young Swedish girl, has been baking cakes for sale to help raise fund to educate the less fortunate and contribute to conservation through the ASSETS Project. She has been tirelessly baking for over a year now to sponsor a child, talk of a heart of gold. She is definitely not employed nor does she have an income but uses the little skills she has to make her dream come true. This is a big challenge and inspiration to all of us, that we do not need millions to make a difference in the world.

The Arabuko-Sokoke Schools and Eco-tourism Scheme (ASSETS) was set up by A Rocha Kenya in 2001. The scheme uses money generated from eco-tourism and donors to provide secondary school "Eco-bursaries" for local children which are closely tied in to action for the conservation of local threatened habitats and species.

We are currently working with local communities near Mida Creek and Arabuko-Sokoke Forest, which are two extremely precious habitats in Malindi/Kilifi.

Story By Daniel Kheri - ASSETS Beneficiary

Signe baking cakes



Daniel and other student in class

Nairobi Farmers go “God’s Way” in their Farms



Cities over the world are known to be biodiversity deserts. They are synonymous with tall buildings, lots of traffic and a sea of humanity, so is Nairobi. The one 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. Seated in my office at the Karara plot in Nairobi’s Karen, I enjoy this stunning site of a beautiful forest, with a wave of lovely butterflies gracing the flowers, a community of rather friendly monkeys complete a magnificent and quite ecosystem. On this particular day however, I gladly welcome an interesting visitor; Sarah Young from A Rocha International. She quickly blends in as I lead the team in transplanting a few seedlings; Meru Oak, Ehretia symosa and Margaritaria discoidea in our garden. We then decide to seize the opportunity, invited farmers from the neighborhood for two days of training on Farming God’s way. It was a wonderful experience sharing with farmers from diverse religious backgrounds; and by this I mean a huge Muslim delegation including the vice-chairman of Supreme Council of Kenya Muslim!

Additionally, we ministered to them on the need to show our love for God’s creation not only in the farm but also in our everyday lives. Encouraging enough, I have recently been answering lots of phone calls from farmers asking specific clarifications regarding the same, which tells me that people are going ‘God’s way’ in their farms!

Story by Raphael Magambo—ARK National Director



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION - at Karen, Nairobi

It was all fun and learning at Karara (Nairobi Office), hosting young environmental enthusiasts from the neighboring, St. Mary’s Primary School Karen. The young scholars took part in exciting educative games; as we engaged them on emerging environmental issues. This is just the launch of a series of such events targeted at reaching out to as many young people as possible.



Students from St Mary’s Primary School, Karen

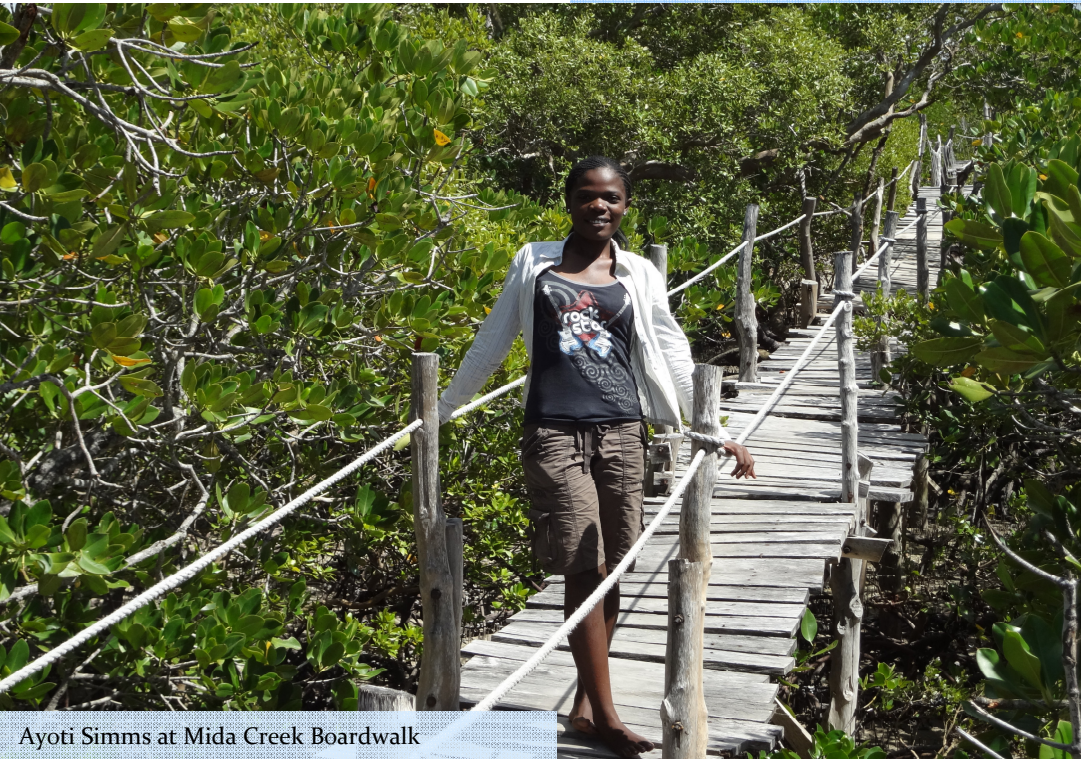
ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

As a Christian organization one of our core mission is to encourage Christians to take care of God’s creation. It is for this reason that members of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) paid us a visit at our Nairobi office. They got to learn what is entailed in conservation agriculture and got an understanding how farming God’s way is carried out. Biodiversity conservation wasn’t left out as we taught them the importance of this. It is our prayer that more Christians will embrace conservation work as part of taking care of God’s creation



VISIT US IN NAIROBI

Karen Opposite Windy Ridge Road, Next to Karen Surgery, P.O BOX 24630, Nairobi, 0502 Kenya Kenya. Tel: 0721 301832 - Raphael



Ayoti Simms at Mida Creek Boardwalk

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 around Mida Creek and Arabuko-Sokoke Forest through the ASSETS Bursary Scheme.

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.

Mwamba Field Study Center

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 as well as facilities for small workshops and seminars. We are located just 80m off the dazzling white sands of Watamu's world-renowned beach and National Marine Park.



A group visiting Mwamba— Fun in the sea



Guest Room at Mwamba

SUPPORT US!

DONATE

Give a donation to A Rocha Kenya Programs on:

www.arocha.org

Support our ASSETS Scholarships Program by making a donation on:

https://my.give.net/arochakenya_assets

HOLIDAY

Come stay at Mwamba Field Study Centre, Book with us on:

mwamba@arocha.org

FUN-TIME

Visit our Eco-facilities:-

Karara Nature Trails

Mida Creek Board-walk

Gede Ruins Tree Platform

VOLUNTEER

Volunteer with us, send your application to:

mwamba@arocha.org

FRIENDS of ARK

Become a Friend of ARK, Registration fees—Ksh 500

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

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kenya@arocha.org