

CROWS NO MORE! PROJECT

Activity report – April 2024, Eric Kinoti

Summary

This month, pre-baiting was done consistently in Timbo Taka and Ocean Sports in Watamu. A roost count was done in Malindi to keep track on the House Crow population there. Further monitoring of crow traps has also continued. A meeting with the Malindi Residents Development Group also provided an additional pledge to support the project. We received two White-faced and four African Scops Owls at the rehab center. A graph with data obtained during a roost count and an Map showing locations of roosting, feeding and counting.

Watamu Pre-baiting

Pre-baiting at Timbo Taka and Ocean Sports been carried out consistently through the month. Normally, the crows only consume some of the bait. This month, however, we recorded the crows consuming the entire bait at one site. This is good news as it shows that they have now started gaining our trust. Although this is not the end yet. Baiting needs to be continuous and consistent so that it is easy to poison them instantly when the poison comes. More pre-baiting locations like Temple Point hotel will be initiated next month. Colin is pursuing Prof. Musyoki of KWS to give feedback on when the stakeholders meeting will be held. We need KWS' clearance to begin the poisoning, so meeting with Prof Musyoki as the lead from KWS is essential to the next stage of controlling the Crows. As of the 29th, the message was that he would confirm the meeting and it would be on short notice.



Fish offcuts ready to be used as bait at Timbo Taka (left). Crows at Timbo Taka (right)

Malindi roost count

A roost count was done in Malindi on 12th April as part of a continuous assessment of House Crow's population trend. A total of 35,961 House Crows were counted in a period of 2 hours. This is 21 % higher than the previous count done in January – but it must be noted that the January count was incomplete due to logistical issues. We will be doing quarterly counts for Watamu, Malindi and Kilifi so that when the poisoning starts we are able to monitor the population properly and tell the story of the decline of House Crows with actual data.



Two members of the crow count team counting crows from a Malindi rooftop

Malindi Residents Development Group

The Malindi Residents Development Association requested a visit from the *Crows No More!* team to inform and update them on where the crow control initiative had reached. They have previously been very supportive of the initiative, and it was very good to reconnect with them and be assured of their support going forward. A brief update of the steps taken so far and plans for the programme was given. Furthermore, it was a privilege to meet one of the pioneers of crow control in Malindi, Mr. Bruce Buckland, who did crow control using Starlicide under Tony Archer's direction from the mid 1980's to when A Rocha took over in 1999. We are grateful that he is also keen to offer his help and expertise when we start poisoning.



A meeting with Malindi Residents Development Group at the Sea Fishing Club, Malindi

Traps

There have been challenges for the crow traps this month. Turtle Bay trap which is one of the best performing was destroyed when a tree fell on it due to the rains. Jeremy Webb's trap in Timboni has also been inactive for a while as he is away. Andy Adams is also not back from travelling. Despite these challenges, a total of 267 House Crows were trapped and killed from two traps. Turtle Bay had 79 and Captain Andy had 188 Crows trapped and killed. Temple Point is adding at least two traps.

Wild bird rehabilitation

This month we welcomed three African Scops Owls and two White-faced Scops Owls from Duncan Michel in Vipingo who had received them from people who found them when a tree was cut and they fell with it. Unfortunately, one of the African Scops had a serious injury on one eye and at the base of its bill and it died that same night. Another one that seemed to have a burn on the right foot was treated with cream seemed to recover from that fully but subsequently was feeding poorly and getting weaker by the day. A decision was made to euthanize it eventually as his condition was getting worse. One more African Scops Owl was rescued from Matsangoni by community members as a result of conservation awareness offered by one of A Rocha's community conservation staff. The Lizard Buzzard is doing fine, the affected eye has a small foggy dot yet but hoping it will clear soon. The African Goshawk will be used to learn more about Falconry and raptor handling.

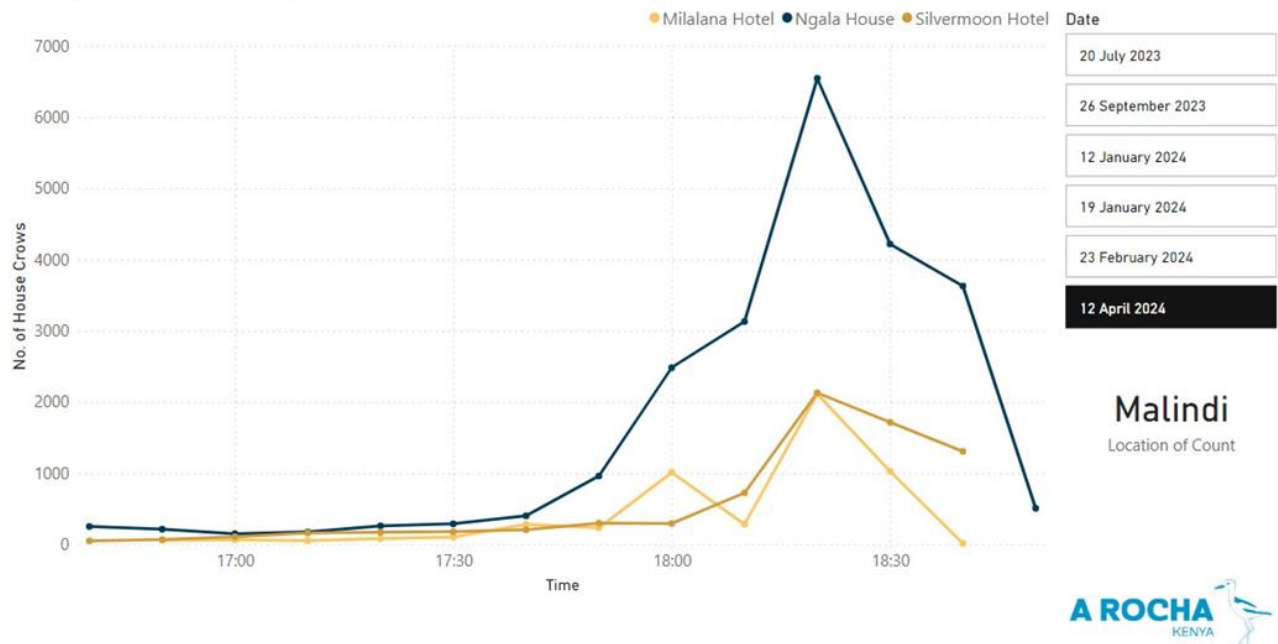


White-faced Scops Owl (left) and African Scops Owl (right) that were brought to the rehab

Additional information

Crow Roost Count

Counting the number of crows returning to the roost count as three sites around the roosting site



Count of House Crows flying into roost in Malindi by count site

