

# CROWS NO MORE! PROJECT

Activity report – May 2024, Eric Kinoti

## Summary this month

This month we saw several crow control activities go as planned. At Chris Wilson's request, a trip to Kilifi was made to help Kilifi Ranch with Crow work. Prebaiting, where we train crows to eat food that we will eventually poison in Watamu, is also gaining pace and with up to 83 recorded eating the bait in one session. A talk was organized in Malindi at the Fishing Club by the Malindi Residents Development Group and Malindi Museum Society to anyone interested and any concerned parties about the A Rocha-led crow control programme. There has been a slow down in trap activity since April due to rains but some traps have been repaired and are catching many crows. We welcomed new Watamu Raptor rehab occupants, two Verreaux's Eagle-Owl from Vipingo and also a Crab-plover and a Common Tern were received and housed at A Rocha. The Crab-plover sadly didn't make it but all the others are safe, cared for and are improving well.

## Kilifi

As we jointly seek ways to tackle the House Crow problem, a trip was made to Kilifi to map foraging sites that can be used for poisoning on the Kilifi Ranch. Two locations for baiting were identified and mapped inside the plantation. We will begin regular pre-baiting on the sites to create a good venue for the poisoning.

## Pre-baiting

This month pre-baiting in Timbo Taka and Ocean Sports continued. Timbo Taka is an open place where kitchen refuse is thrown regularly. The crows' response there was overwhelming with as many as 40 coming down to feed at one time. There is also a low risk of secondary species disturbance as animals like chickens, cats and pigeons are not ~~around~~ mostly common here. The response in Ocean Sports by the crows has been slower since they are not accustomed to feeding there already, but numbers are picking up with over 50 regularly recorded. Plans are to try pre-baiting in Temple Point hotel as well.



*Crows looking at the bait. They circle curiously then grab a bite and leave.*

## NGO and Stakeholder meeting – Malindi.

The Malindi Residents Development Group and Malindi Museum Society organized a Crow Control stakeholder meeting. The meeting was attended by several NGO's, [businesses](#) and private individuals ~~among them including~~ Nature Kenya, National Museums of Kenya, Tropical Village and Kennect 5 among others. A presentation [was given by Colin Jackson](#) about the history of [House Crows in Kenya](#), Crow Control on the coast and steps achieved ~~so far so far was done~~. They were also informed of the plans and steps to be taken later which includes the purchase and use of Starlicide. Issues raised were the process of acquiring and using Starlicide and [that of finding any-potential-for](#) collaborat[orsions](#) with companies like airlines ~~since they are also affected~~[who can help support the initiative](#). Conclusions were made to reach out to these companies and the local government. Chris Everard, who is actively involved with [cCrow](#) work in Vipingo, pledged to help raise [Ksh 1.5 million Kenya Shillings](#) for [cCrow](#) control when fundraising starts. The attendees were updated on the upcoming meeting with KWS, Little Kenya Gardens [\(who hold the permit for importing the poison\)](#) and stakeholders in Mombasa that was scheduled for ~~the~~ 7<sup>th</sup> of June.



Malindi Resident Development Group Chairperson Karin Hegemann (left). Attendees listening carefully to the presentation (Right).

## Traps

In May, two traps were active, Captain Andy and Turtle Bay Beach Club. Turtle Bay recently renovated its trap after it was destroyed by the heavy rains towards the end of April. It is now active and [cCrows](#) will start to be taken out in June. Captain Andy's trap captured and killed 277 in May.

## Wild bird rehabilitation

Towards the end of the month two Verreaux's Eagle-owls were received from Vipingo. They were trapped by villagers after they were ~~found-suspected~~ to be eating their chickens. Thankfully, the villagers did not kill the birds but handed them over to Duncan Mitchel in Vipingo. They were healthy but dehydrated despite the shock from the stress they endured from being trapped and being transported. We intend to release them as far away from human settlement as possible as a way of reducing Human Wildlife conflict that often leads to birds being killed.

A Rocha also received a [Little-Common](#) Tern that was caught ~~by~~ [beside](#) the Blue Bay beach in Watamu by fishermen. It was weak, skinny and could not fly. It had an injury to its right eye and could not properly feed. Bea Anderson, ~~an expert surgeon~~ [a doctor who is supporting the rehab centre](#), says that it might never recover from the eye injury as it seems like the nerve is completely damaged. We hope it will recover and finally return to the wild.





*The Little-Common Tern's eye when it arrived. Notice the cloudy part of the cornea.*



*One of the Verreaux's Eagle-Owl, just immediately it arrived.*

