WILDLIFEDIRECT

Newsletter
Issue #15
August 28th, 2020

WILDLIFE WARRIORS KIDS

Hello Wildlife Warriors!
Stay connected to nature even when you are at home.

In this week's Issue, we feature the **African Wild Dog.** Did you know that the African Wild Dogs are expert hunters? Do Wild Dogs also get rabies just like Domestic Dogs? Please read on! In this edition, we give you tips on how to take the **BEST** photographs for Season Two of the Nature's Treasures Photo Competition, wild jokes and much much more…

Stay with us on this fun filled adventure and always remember to share with your family and friends.

CONGRATULATIONS HANAIN

Hanain Ayub (15) submitted this beautiful image of a lioness captioned 'The Golden Queen'.

It was in the late evening when he took this photo at the Tsavo East National Park and he considers it a lucky photo.

Hanain loves nature photography since it means spending a lot of time with wild animals.

"Don't get bored and don't expect results all the time. Just keep trying. Always take photos and be different." Hanain Ayub

Season 2 of the Nature's Treasures Competition has Started!!! Submit 3 photos on the theme '*Wildlife Portraits*' by 14th August.

SUBMIT YOUR PHOTOS

NATURE'S TREASURES PHOTO COMPETITION

Theme: Fins, Feathers and flowers - Aug 29th to Sept 11th
Enter up to 3 photos to bit.ly/WildlifeWarriorsEA

Prizes!

Professional Category
Winner KES 5000
Runner up KES 3000

Amateur Category
Winner KES 3500
Runner up KES 2000

Junior Category (Under 15 years)
Winner KES 2000
Runner up KES 1000

Now inviting photographers from East Africa!

WILDLIFE DIRECT | CONSERVATION through PUBLIC HEALTH | WILDLIFE CLUBS OF KENYA | TONY WILD Wildlife . Media . Impact | OGO-LAW The green brief | GORILLA CONSERVATION COFFEE | WILDLIFE WARRIORS

Through Nature photography, children can appreciate and connect with wildlife, environment and nature on a personal level.

Are you 15 years and below? Submit your photos under the Junior Category and encourage your age mates to take part in the Wildlife Warriors Nature's Treasures Photo Competition here
http://bit.ly/WildlifeWarriorsEA

Go Out. Explore. Take Photos. Share.

UNDERSTANDING THE AFRICAN WILD DOG

Vocabulary

Dominant animal- an animal that has power and influence over others

Alpha male/Alpha female- refers to the dominant male and female in the group

Breeding- this is the act of mating and reproducing offspring by animals

- Wild Dogs are scientifically known as *Lyacaon pictus* and they are an endangered species.
- A wild dog pack has two alphas. The alpha male and alpha female. They are the only breeding pair in a pack. The female gives birth to between 8

and 11 pups after a gestation period of 71 to 73 days.

- Though the alphas are the dominant animals, they do not make all the decisions. Wild dogs live, hunt and make decisions in packs and that helps their survival.

- The dominant pair marks their territory with feces and urine. African Wild Dogs aggressively defend their territory against unrelated neighbors and will fight intruders to the death.

- There are 8,000 Wild Dogs in Africa in an estimated 750 packs. They are carnivores and are also called the African hunting dogs because they are expert hunters.

- In Kenya, Wild Dogs are found in the Laikipia, Samburu, Masai Mara and Tsavo regions.
- Wild Dogs hunt for an average of three and a half hours to get enough food. Although impalas make up the majority of their diet, what they eat depends on where they live.
- Lions and Spotted Hyenas are the main enemies of African Wild Dogs because they steal their prey. African Wild Dogs need to eat enough meat to recover the energy they exhaust while hunting.

Article courtesy of Mpala Live, Dedan Ngatia and The Wildlife Warriors Episode on Laikipia Wild Dogs.

In Swahili, the Wild Dog is known as *Mbwa Koko*. What do you call the Wild Dog in your community?

THREATS FACING THE AFRICAN WILD DOG

- **Habitat destruction-** this has been caused by human activity. Although the largest populations of the African Wild Dogs live in protected areas, they go beyond the boundaries and are vulnerable to high-speed vehicles, snares and poisoning.
- **Prey shortages (when prey reduces)** - Wild Dogs go into homesteads and kill livestock. People then kill them to protect their flock.
- **Disease-** Wild Dogs are prone to the same diseases that affect our domestic dogs. Canine distemper and rabies have been known to wipe out entire packs. In 2017, there was an outbreak of canine distemper virus in Laikipia which killed 99% of the entire Wild Dog population. It is therefore important to vaccinate all domestic dogs in the area.

LEGEND OF THE AFRICAN WILD DOG

There is a Maasai story about three boys of long ago. As custom required, they were sent into the mountain for their adolescent rite of passage but the boys became rebellious and they could not contain their energy. The boys escaped into the night and this made the elders very angry.

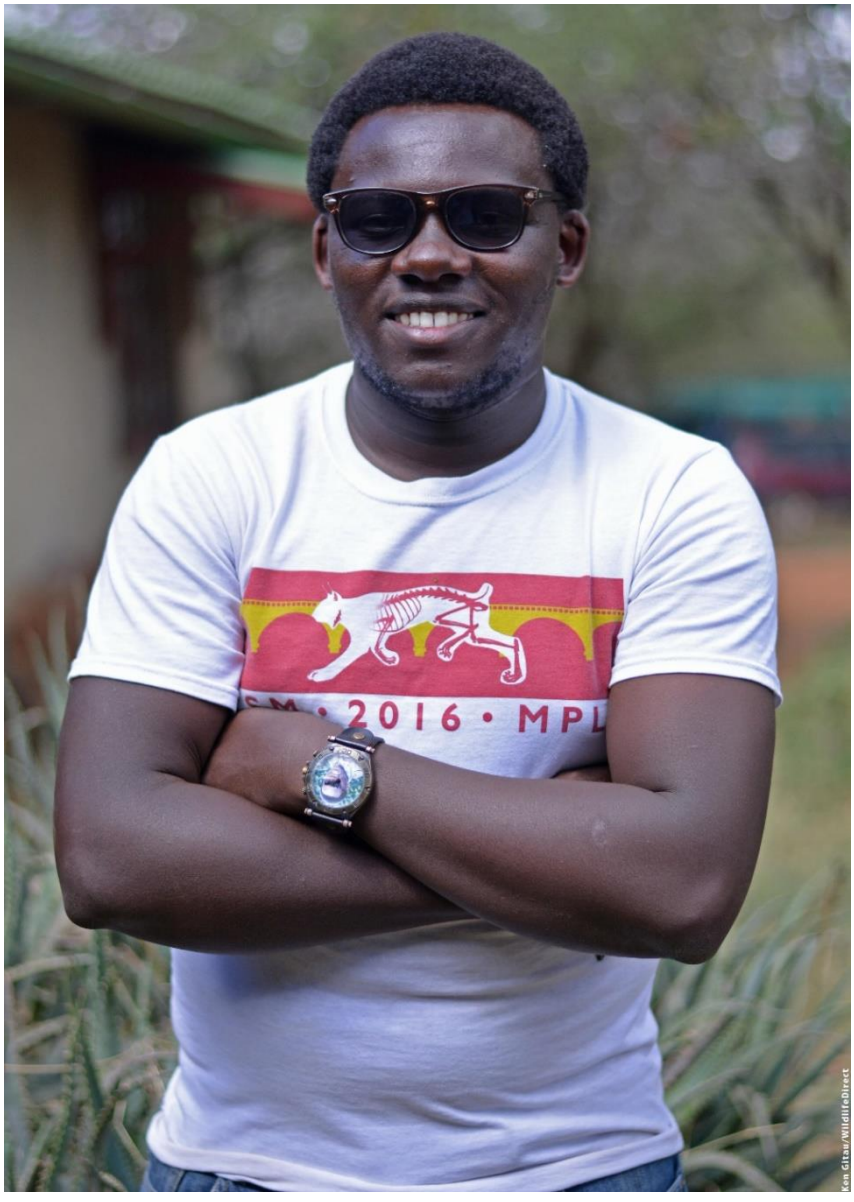
The elders cursed the boys and their skin turned into fur, twisted their limbs into legs and banished them to roam endlessly in the wild as a pack. Ever since, they have been known as the African Wild Dogs.

Source: Stories from the bush, Mpala Live.

Do you have a story from your community about an animal that you would like to share?

Send your story via SMS or WhatsApp to 0746 511787
We will share it with other kids in the next issue!

MEET DEDAN NGATIA



Q: Tell us about yourself

A: I was born in Naromoru in Nyeri County. I went to Kahuho Primary School and later joined Brickwoods Secondary School.

I studied Natural Resource Management, Wildlife option at Karatina University in Nyeri and a Masters in Wildlife at the same university.

I am now a Researcher at the Mpala Research Centre in Laikipia and second year PhD student at the University of Wyoming, USA studying the Ecology of Wild Dogs.

Q: Have you always wanted to be a Wild Dog expert?

A: No. I have always been interested in carnivores so I had been reading about them since I was young.

However, when I came to understand the issues affecting wildlife, I singled out the Wild Dogs. I got an opportunity to head a Wild Dog project in Laikipia in 2016 to date.

Q: Why did you chose to study the African Wild Dog?

A: Of all the carnivores, Wild Dogs are my favorite species. They are very social animals.

Q: What is your most memorable moment on the job?

A: The first time I saw wild dogs in 2012. It was almost unbelievable! Also, when I started working with them and I darted my first Wild Dog. I still remember how that felt.

Q: What was your worst day on the job?

A: In 2017, there was an outbreak of the canine distemper virus. This disease killed the Wild Dogs in Laikipia leaving only one survivor. I was devastated.

Q: What are you most proud of?

A: The efforts that have been put in the conservation of the African Wild Dog. As part of my work, we started a Rabies Vaccination Campaign for domestic dogs. This is because rabies affects not only the dogs we keep at home but also Wild Dogs and people.

Photo credits; Mpala R.C/ Ken Gitau.

The campaign has also given us the opportunity to educate people on the importance of coexisting with Wild Dogs.

In the past, people killed Wild Dogs when they killed their flock for food but this has changed over time.

Q: What would you say to advise a child who wants to be a researcher or animal expert?

A: There are plenty of opportunities. You need to be focused and read as much as you can on the animal you are interested in. Be passionate about this and nothing will limit all that can happen.

You can watch Dedan Ngatia going about his work and learn more about Laikipia Wild Dogs on this episode of Wildlife Warriors

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=57tIJtmnHtI

WILD JOKES! 🤣

Q: What do you call a pack of wild dogs that enjoy listening to Mozart?
A: A Wolfgang

Q: How are wild dog catchers paid?
A: In pounds

Q: What do you get when you cross a wild dog and a calculator?
A: A friend you can count on

Q: Why did the wild dog cross the road?
A: To reach the parking lot

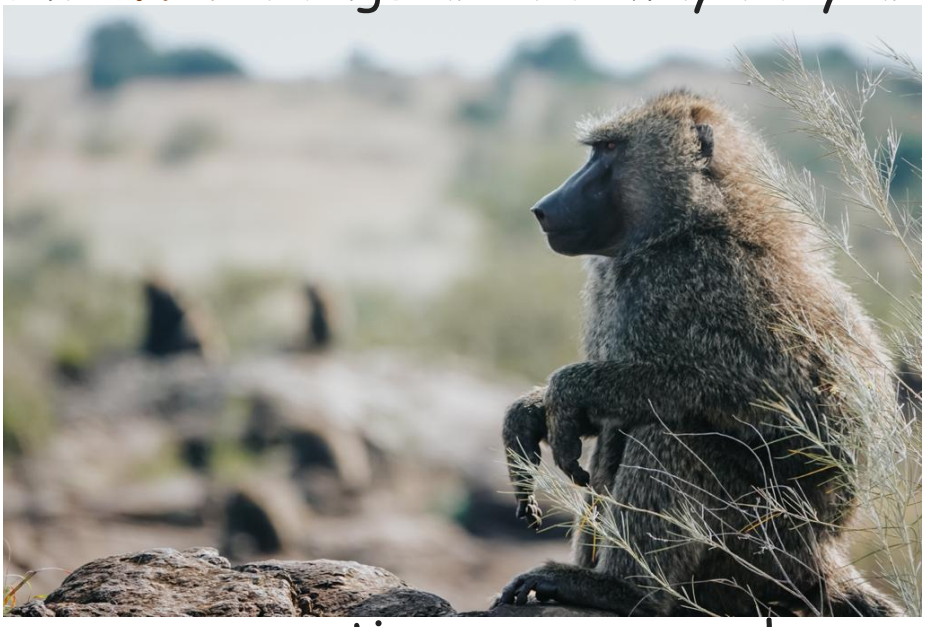
Q: What did the gang of wild dogs chant?
A: Let's raise the woof

Q: What do you call an optimistic wild dog?
A: A paws-itive one

Wild jokes courtesy of Eric Sasia

NATURE INVESTIGATIONS
PART 5

Think like a detective and come up with a hypothesis to find out **WHY** things are the way they are.



There are many questions you can ask yourself - for example,

- Why do all cicada stop singing at exactly the same time?"
- Why do some unrelated butterflies have the same colors?", "Why do baboons turn over rocks?"
- You can even begin to test your ideas. Perhaps baboons are looking for grubs - you can find out by turning over some rocks yourself.

Hypothesis is a statement which provides a basis for further investigation

When you are investigating nature you are engaging your whole brain and all your senses - **sight, touch, smell, taste (only if it's safe to do so)**

- Why do all the weavers build their nests so close together on one side of a tree?
- You could make several *hypothesis*

- For example- Is it is to avoid predators, or is it to avoid the sun?
- **How can you test this?** Look around at the other trees, is there a pattern? Are all weaver nests on the same side of all the trees? If not then it is probably not the sun.

You may not be able to answer all the questions, but you will learn a lot more about the natural world by asking questions and trying to find the answers through your own observations.

Nature Investigations by Dr. Paula Kahumbu

Take a photo of the **work** you have done in **your journal and send it** to us via **WhatsApp on 0746 511 787** so that we can **share your amazing work with all the other kids.**

ART FOR WILDLIFE

Drawing of a healthy environment by Mwanajuma Ali from M'bweka Primary School in Kwale County

Do you have a drawing, painting, essay or poem you would like to share with other kids? Please send a photo of your drawing and painting or a text/WhatsApp message with your poem /essay to 0746 511 787

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP NATURE

Kitchen and Flower Gardens

We can help nature by gardening at home and learning how nature works and the benefits that come from caring for it.
You can grow vegetables, grains, fruits for your food and flowers to beautify your home.

You will have fun in planting seeds, watching them sprout, and grow and finally getting to harvest.

You will also get to understand nature, learn to be responsible and curious about nature.

What to plant:

Carrots, tomatoes, sunflowers, beans, maize, Sweet potatoes., Irish potatoes, flowers, green tea leaves and many more

TYPES OF KITCHEN GARDENS

Make an In-ground garden near your home on a place that the vegetables will enjoy direct sunlight daily.

You can make a Container garden by planting vegetables, fruits or flowers in containers that are no longer in use.

Make a Sack kitchen garden by piling soil and mixing with organic manure. Then dig holes and plant different seedlings of vegetables including kales, onions, spinach in your compound or balcony.

Share with us what you have done to help nature this week by sending an SMS or WhatsApp text to 0746 511 787

THIS WEEK ON MY WILD AFRICA

It's the final stage of training for the cheetah cubs' Yankee and X-ray (the King Cheetah cub) as they face the ultimate test.

Have you been following the Cheetah Diaries episode every Sunday? If yes, what have you learnt so far about cheetahs?

Join us this Sunday at 5:30 PM EAT only on Citizen TV Kenya.

Watch the **film** with your family and tell us **what you learnt** by sending an **SMS** or **WhatsApp message** to **0746 511787**

COMING UP… DON'T MISS

By Seyan Hirani (13 Years)

- My Wild Africa on Citizen TV at 5:30pm on August 30th, 2020
- International Whale Shark Day is on August 30th, 2020

FOR PARENTS

- Please tell us what you think of this newsletter by filling the second part of bit.ly/WWKIDS and we will get back to you.

- If you would love to support Wildlife Warriors Kids, please make a donation to:

PAYBILL NO. 600100

A/C NO. 0100003937598

Email us: info@wildlifedirect.org

Contact us on: +254 746 511 787

To subscribe to this newsletter series, click here

bit.ly/WWKidsSubscribe

Follow @WildlifeDirect