WILDLIFEDIRECT

Newsletter
Issue #21
October 9th, 2020

WILDLIFE WARRIORS KIDS

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

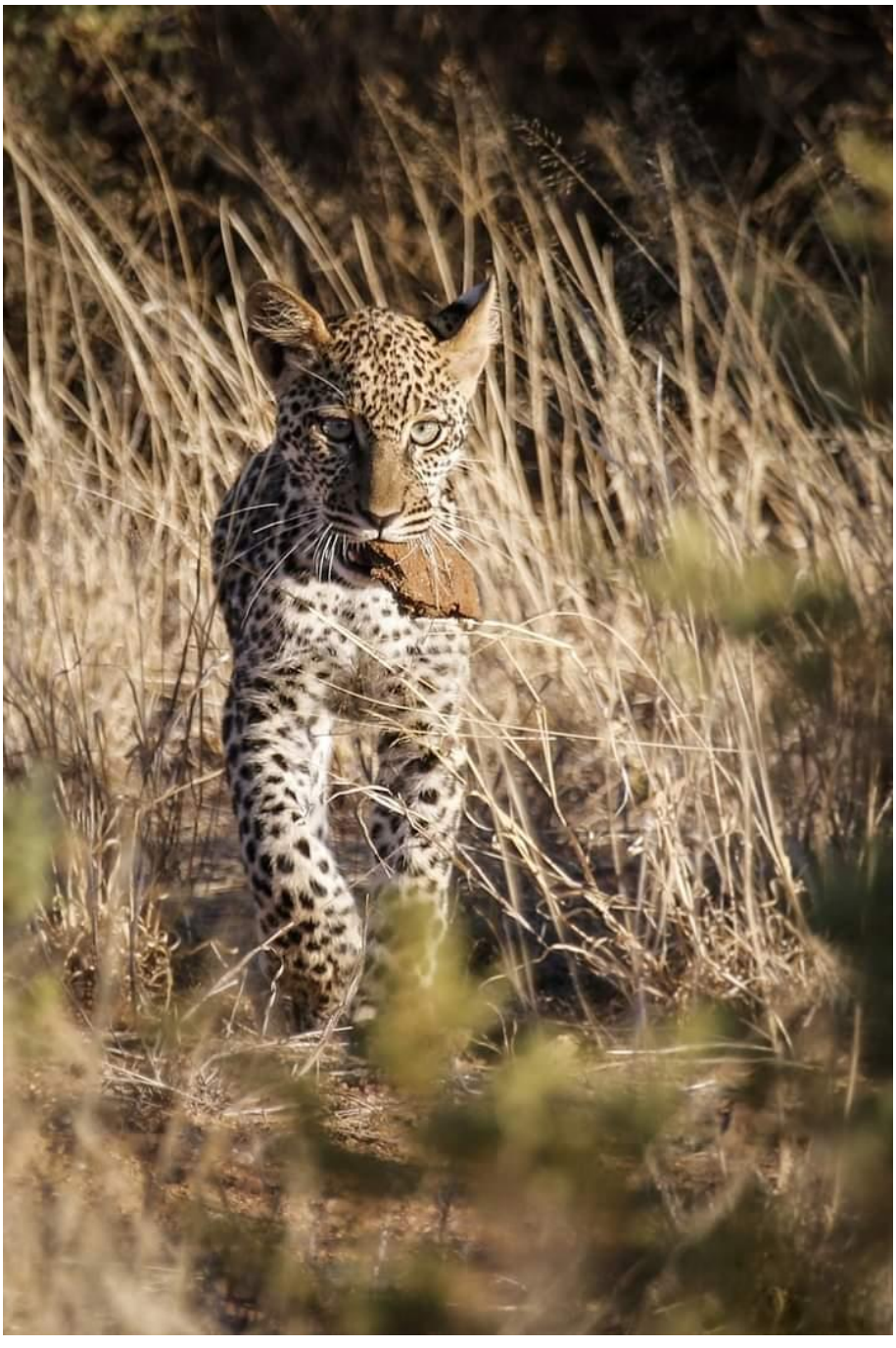
© Local Ocean Conservation

In this week's Issue, we take a dive into the oceans to take a closer look at the **Sea Turtles**! Did you know that all tortoises are, in fact, turtles, but not all turtles are tortoises?

We also share amazing facts about turtles, meet the Nature's Treasures Photo Competition Junior category winner, and explore actions we can take for nature. As usual, we have more wild jokes, and much, much more... Please read on!

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

CONGRATULATIONS HANAIN



Hanain Ayub (15 years) from Kenya is the Runner Up in the Wildlife Warriors Nature's Treasures Photo Competition Junior Category on the theme **Funny and Cute Wildlife.**

Hanain captioned this remarkable photo as 'The little rock collector'.

The judges loved the image which captured a rare and beautiful moment of a leopard cub carrying a piece of rock in its mouth.

KIDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY...

We spoke to Hanain about his image...

Q: What is the story behind this image?

A: We were in Samburu looking for animals all day to no avail. In the evening, we finally found paw prints, which we followed for about two hours. Then we found some leopard cubs who seemed to have been separated from their mother. Luckily, ours was the only car so we didn't scare them away.

The leopard cubs were playing with each other when one of them picked a rock in its mouth to play with and soon enough they were playing with it together. I got that shot before they disappeared into the bushes.

Congratulations Hanain!

You can see more of his beautiful photos on Instagram @hanain_ This is his third win. He wins Ksh. 1000!

Submit up to 3 photos to the Junior Category on the theme; **"DRAMATIC WILDLIFE** by October 23, 2020.

SUBMIT YOUR PHOTOS

NATURE'S TREASURES PHOTO COMPETITION

Theme: Dramatic Wildlife (Wildlife in Action/Wildlife Behaviour) (Oct 10th to Oct 23rd)

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

Open to photographers in East Africa!

WILDLIFEDIRECT · African People & Wildlife · OGO-LAW The green brief · TONY WILD Wildlife . Media . Impact · GORILLA CONSERVATION COFFEE · WILDLIFE WARRIORS

Are you a photographer of 15 years and below in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda or Burundi?

Share up to 3 photos you have taken with your camera or phone under the Junior category on the theme **DRAMATIC WILDLIFE**

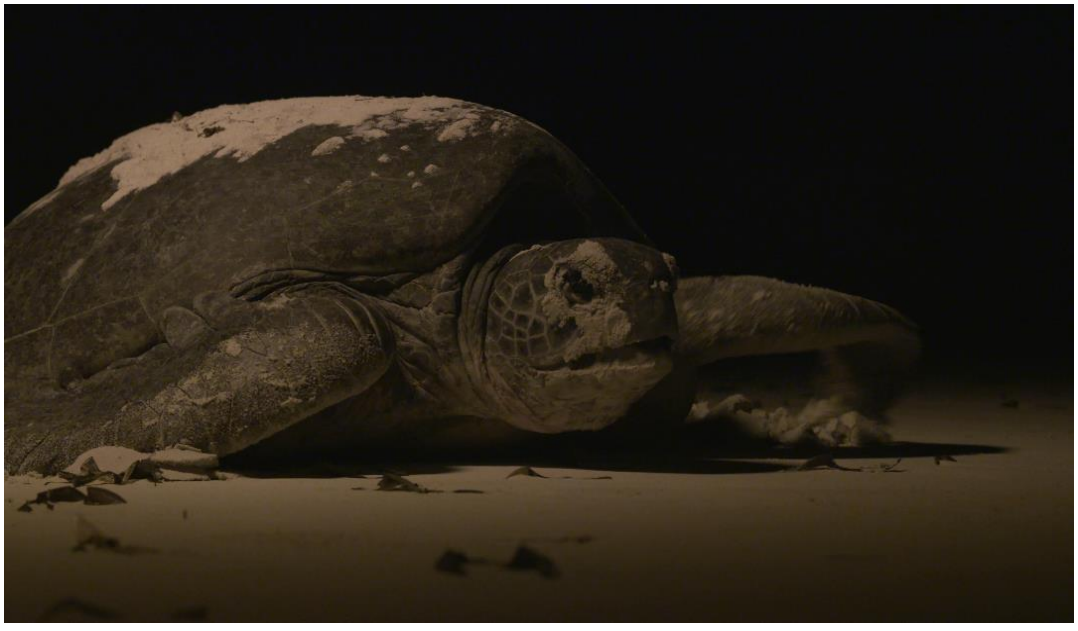
You could be a **WINNER**!
http://bit.ly/WildlifeWarriorsEA

Go Out. Explore. Take Photos. Share.

TURTLES

Turtles are reptiles with hard shells that protect them from predators.
The shells can be hard and bony or soft and leathery depending on the type of turtle.

Turtles are the only animals with unique shells that cover the top and bottom of their bodies.



There are over 250 species of turtles, divided into three major groups: **Marine turtles, land turtles and aquatic turtles.**

Vocabulary:

- Nest – A place in the sand dug by a female turtle where she lays her eggs
- Carapace – The upper part of the turtle shell
- Plastron – The lower part of the shell; under the turtle
- Hatchling – A baby turtle

TURTLE FACTS

- Turtles belong to one of the oldest groups of reptiles in the world as they have existed for over 200 million years.
- Just like other reptiles, turtles are cold-blooded, have scales, lay eggs, and breathe using their lungs.

Mary and Joseph holding Turtle shells. Can you see the backbone?

- However, turtles are the only reptiles that have both a shell and a beak instead of a mouth.
- Just like your bones, a turtle's **shell** is part of its skeleton. The shell is made up of over **50 bones** which include a turtles **rib cage** and **spine**.

- Turtles can live for a very long time
- They can be found on every continent except Antarctica

LAND TURTLES

- Land turtles are commonly called tortoises. These are turtles that live on land and are not equipped for water.
- Tortoises have broad, stumpy feet.

Leopard tortoise at Mpala Research Centre

They are generally herbivores, always feeding on vegetables, fruits, grass and some also eat beetles.

- A tortoise shell is dome-shaped which allows it to fully hide its head and feet inside the shell.
- Tortoises can be found on all continents apart from Antarctica.

Aldabra Giant tortoise at Mount Kenya Conservancy courtesy of Joydrine

AQUATIC TURTLES

- These are also known as Terrapins.
- They live in fresh or brackish water.
- They are omnivores.

Serrated Hinged Terrapins at Nairobi National Park Courtesy of Sidney Shema

- Terrapin shells are less dome-shaped than tortoises and their feet are webbed so they can swim easily.

SEA TURTLES

These are also known as Marine or Sea turtles.

Did you know that…

- Sea turtles cannot retract their head and flippers into their shells, so they must always swim away from predators.
- All turtles lay eggs in the sand and leave the eggs to hatch on their own.
- Temperature dictates the gender of baby turtles. Warmer nests have more females, and cooler nests have more males hatching.
- Sea turtles have special glands that help remove salt from the seawater they drink.

SEA TURTLE FACTS

- Unlike tortoises and terrapins, sea turtles do not have feet, but instead, have flippers.
- Female sea turtles travel thousands of kilometers from where they feed back to the exact beach they hatched from to nest and lay their eggs.
- Turtles have to come up to the surface to breath. They can hold their breathe for over an hour by slowing down their heart rate.

Photo courtesy of Local Ocean Conservation

- Male Turtles spend all their life in the ocean. They never return to the beach because they don't need to lay eggs.
- Only 1 in 1,000 hatchlings will survive to adulthood.

SEA TURTLE SPECIES

The 5 species of turtles found in Kenya's ocean waters are - Green, Hawksbill, Leatherback, Loggerhead, and Olive Ridley turtle.

❖ Leatherback Sea Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*)

Leatherback Turtle - courtesy of Local Ocean Conservation

- Their conservation status is **Vulnerable.**
- They are the world's largest turtles weighing up to 900 kgs and up to 2m long.
- They are the only turtles that lack a hard shell and scales.
- Their favorite food is jellyfish and can eat up to 1000 jellyfish per day.
- They are the fastest sea turtles in the oceans.
- They are able to maintain warm body temperature in cold water.

❖ Hawksbill Sea Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)

- These species are listed as **Critically Endangered**. This means that there is an **extremely high risk** of them being extinct in the wild.
- They get their name from their long, narrow hawk-like beaks.
- Their upper shells have beautiful reddish-brown patterned shells, golden bottom shells, and two claws on each flipper.

Hawksbill Turtle - Photo taken by Ken Gitau

- They eat soft corals and toxic sponges which may otherwise kill coral reefs.
- The toxic sponges make their flesh poisonous to eat even for humans.

❖ Green Sea Turtle (Dermochelys coriacea)

- They are listed as **Endangered,** meaning that there is a very high risk of going extinct in the wild.
- They are named not after the color of their shell but for their green-colored fat found under the shell.
- Female Green Turtles return to the same beach where they were born to nest no matter how far it is.

Green Turtle courtesy of Local Ocean Conservation

- The Green Turtle is the second largest turtle weighing up to 250kg.
- Baby Green Turtles are omnivores and feed on crabs, jellyfish, and sponges, whereas adult Green Turtles are herbivores and feed only on seagrass and algae.

❖ Loggerhead Sea Turtle (*Caretta caretta*)

- They are also listed as **Endangered**, like the Green Turtles
- They are named after their massive muscular heads and strong jaws.
- They feed on invertebrates like crabs and upon excretion provide food for other animals in the ocean.

Loggerhead Turtle - courtesy of Local Ocean Conservation

❖ Olive Ridley Sea Turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*)

- They are the smallest, quickest on land and fastest nester of all the sea turtles.
- Their conservation status is **Vulnerable**.
- They have an olive green color on the skin and carapace with a unique hump.

Olive Ridley Turtle - courtesy of Local Ocean Conservation

THREATS FACING TURTLES

- **Consumption and illegal trade of turtle meat, oil, eggs, and shell:** some communities believe that turtle meat and oil have some medicinal value. The shells are also sold as ornaments
- **By-Catch in Fishing:** Every year, fishing nets capture, injure, and kill hundreds of thousands of turtles.

- **Global warming:** Rising temperatures lead to sea level rise which can wash away turtle nesting grounds.
- **Coastal development:** Destruction of turtle nests by construction of seawalls and use of plastic sandbags .

- **Beach activities & Lighting**: Turtles rely on dark, quiet beaches to lay eggs and for the eggs to hatch successfully.
- Lighting and human activities on beaches during the night discourage female sea turtles from nesting.

Turtle fibro-papillomatosis is a disease affecting turtles caused by waste pollution

- **Plastic Pollution and other sea waste pollution**: Turtles mistake plastic bags for jellyfish and eat them. They also get caught in ropes and other debris; polluted water causes diseases that lead to blindness and eventually death.
- **Habitat destruction**: If a turtle returns to the beach to lay its eggs and finds the beach destroyed, it will go back to the sea without laying any eggs.
- **Terrapins are affected by diversion of rivers, dam constructions, sand mining and pollution.**

MEET FIKIRI KIPONDA

Q: Tell us a little about yourself.

A: I was born in Kilifi North in a place called Roka and went through my education in the same area. I went to Chumani Primary and Chumani Secondary School.

My favorite subjects in school were Kiswahili, Physical Education (PE), Biology, Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics.

Q: How did you get interested in Turtles and why?

A: I started out as a volunteer for several years because of the interest and love I had in turtle conservation. I have been working at Local Ocean Trust for close to 4 years, and honestly, the most amazing moments I have are when I see the tiny hatchlings racing to the sea; every hatching is like the first for me every time!

Fikiri and his colleagues at work at the Turtle Hospital

Q: How can you tell the difference between a male and female Turtles?

A: Before maturity, the gender of a turtle cannot be determined. Once mature the gender can be determined through the size of their tails. Males have longer tails compared to females

Q: How many are there in Kenya and in the world?

A: We don't know the exact number because Turtles spend their lives in the oceans many kilometres away from the beach. However, there are 7 species of sea turtles in the world and 5 species can be found in Kenya.

Q: What are the threats facing Turtles?

A: Turtles are under threat due to:

- Plastic pollution
- Coastal development
- Poaching
- Bycatch
- Diseases due to water pollution
- Climate change

Fikiri with a turtle

Picture courtesy of Local Ocean Conservation

Q: How would a young person get involved in Turtle conservation? What do they need to study?

A: The interest begins with you. You must be passionate. When I finished school, I actually studied accounting which, is distantly related to conservation, but here I am today doing turtle conservation work instead of balancing books and figures. The rest can come later if you want to specialize in a particular field e.g. marine biology, wildlife management, aquatic science, and others.

Children learning about turtle conservation

Picture courtesy of Local Ocean Conservation

Q: What can we do to save the Turtles?

A: Young people can take part in the following activities:

- Participate in beach clean-ups;
- Write essays, poems or compose songs about Turtles;
- Do projects related to Turtle conservation like, sand art, paintings, mosaics, and crafts;

Turtle Release

Picture courtesy of Local Ocean Conservation

- Volunteer to spend time in organizations that are conserving Turtles to learn more;
- Read books related to Turtles and other marine life.

MEET A GREEN TURTLE

Green, Hawksbill, and Olive Ridley turtles are known to nest in Kenya. Maybe you have come across the story of Mama Mayai.

Photo of a green turtle (Chelonia mydas) by Ewout Knoester REEFolution Foundation

If you have not, Mama Mayai is a green turtle that has been recorded nesting in Kenya for 17 years now, according to Local Ocean Conservation's records!

In six nesting seasons, Mama Mayai has laid 35 nests along Watamu beach. She has been visiting Local Ocean Conservation nesting sites since 2003!
Generally, a green turtle lays 75 to 200 eggs and covers the hole with sand. A turtle's nest is called a clutch.

- A female green sea turtle can lay several clutches of eggs per season. Once the nesting season is over, the turtle leaves the nesting ground.

Photo of a nesting mother turtle, image from Cape Hatteras National Seashore

- At this point, her role is complete, and she leaves her eggs to develop, hatch and the baby turtles to fend for themselves.
- The baby turtles will climb to the surface, leave their nest, and run down the beach to start a new life on their own!

***Can you draw a Turtle? Send your drawing or* painting or a text/WhatsApp message with your poem /essay to 0746 511 787**

Photo of a baby turtle making its way down the beach into the ocean at Diani beach.

Read more about Mama Mayai on;

https://localocean.co/2020/07/mama_mayai_35_turtle_nests/?fbclid=IwAR0wXx9qsb6KNwHLQdva8VwU8g3WUOipv3DILDNdiMVadKE4ECM71rU_ovk

Article Courtesy of Fatma Mayenze
Marine Biologist

Conservation Education Society

WILD JOKES! 🤣

Q: What do turtles do on their birthday?

A: They shell-ebrate.

Q. Why can't a turtle eat food from KFC?

A: Because, a turtle is too slow for fast food.

Q: What do turtles use to communicate?
A: A shell-phone.

Q: What type of photos does a turtle love to take?
A: Shellfies.

Q: What do you call a turtle who loves photography?

A: A snapping turtle.

Q: What do you call a turtle chef?

A: A slow- cooker.

Q: What do you get when you cross a turtle with a giraffe?

A: A turtle-neck.

Q: How did the turtle get off his back?

A: He rocked and rolled!

Wild jokes courtesy of Joy Omulupi

ART FOR WILDLIFE

Drawing of a Giraffe and a turtle by Hildah Moiyare from Olgirgir Primary School during the 2019 Wildlife Warriors Kids Expedition.

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

Solving the E-waste problem.

How many electronic gadgets are in your home? TV? DVD? Radio?
Have you ever wondered what happens to these gadgets when they get spoilt and you throw them away?

When an electronic gadget is not disposed of properly, it releases dangerous chemicals and metals that seep into the soil, rivers, lakes and these eventually end up in our drinking water.

DO NOT THROW AWAY OLD ELECTRONICS

Solving the E-waste problem.

Photo image courtesy of Pixabay

With permission from your parents collect all electronics not in use and :-

- Donate those that are still working to a charity
- Take them to an E-Waste collection point.
- Ask your parent or teacher how to reuse, and recycle electronics.

NOTE!!! Electronic gadgets can be dangerous...Don't puncture them with sharp objects. Be careful!

To learn more about how you can solve the e-waste problem click here; https://weeecentre.com/

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

OCTOBER 17, 2020 IS BIG DAY FOR BIRDS

This is an opportunity to celebrate the birds both near our homes and around the world.

You can participate by watching birds from home or join the Bird Walk and Bird Spotting at Naretunoi Conservancy with bird experts.

To learn about October Big Day, click;
https://ebird.org/octoberbigday

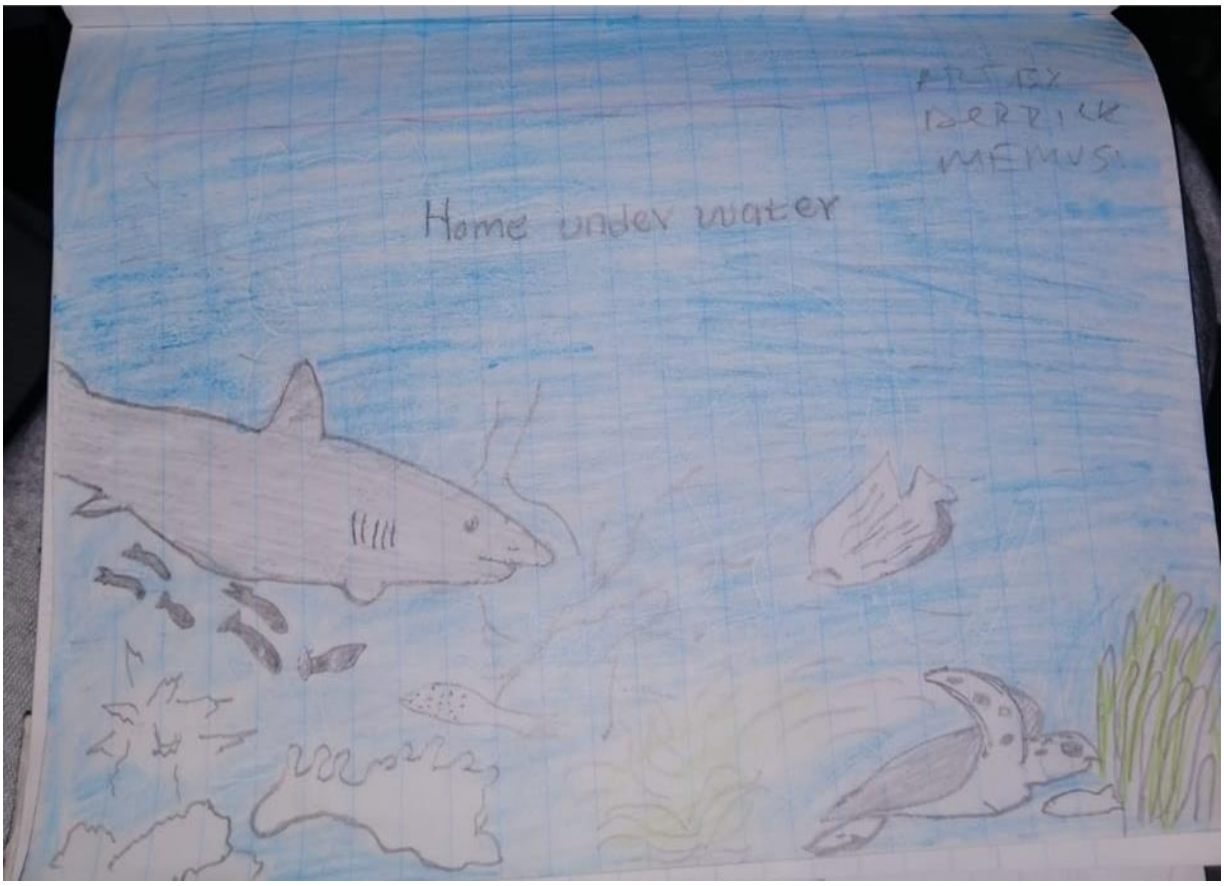
THIS WEEK ON MY WILD AFRICA

Although they rely primarily on sight, **cheetahs** have excellent **hearing.** They are able to **hear** the slightest sound and high frequencies. Human ears cannot detect many of the sounds that are heard by **cheetahs.**

Tune in to My Wild Africa this Sunday on Citizen TV at 5:30 PM EAT.

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



Art by Derrick Memusi, 16Yr old student at Doldol Boys High School

- **My Wild Africa on Citizen TV every Sunday at 5:30pm**
- **International E-waste Day – October 14th, 2020**
- **World Food Day - October 16th 2020**
- **October Big Day - October 17th, 2020**

THANK YOU

Wildlife Warriors Kids Newsletter is issued each week to inform, inspire and encourage children who are at home during the COVID19 pandemic which resulted in schools closing.

It is distributed completely free of charge to children and their parents anywhere in Kenya, Africa and the world.

If you would like to contribute to the Wildlife Warriors Kids program, please make a donation to:

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A/C NO. 0100003937598

OR

Email us: info@wildlifedirect.org

Contact us on: +254 746 511 787

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https://bit.ly/WWKidsSignUp

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