WILDLIFEDIRECT

Newsletter
Issue #22
October 16th, 2020

WILDLIFE WARRIORS KIDS

Welcome to Issue 22! In this week's Issue, we focus on **BIRDS**. Did you know that birds are the only animals with feathers?

We will learn all about birds, meet the Nature's Treasures Photo Competition Junior category winner, and explore actions we can take for nature. We have wild jokes, and much, much more... **Please read on!**

Pupils from Dadachabssa Primary School in Isiolo with a young Ostrich they adopted

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

CONGRATULATIONS SHIRU

Shiru Ndegwa (14 years) from Kenya wins the Wildlife Warriors Nature's Treasures Photo Competition Junior Category on the theme **Humans Helping Nature** with the beautiful pictures of children during a tree planting activity.

The judges were fascinated by the photo which captured beautiful moments of children learning how to grow trees.

We spoke to Shiru Ndegwa about her image…

Q. Which camera did you use?

A. Canon EOS 4000D

KIDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY...

Q. What is the story behind the image?

A. I took these images during a tree planting activity with Kijani World. It was really fun teaching these children about not only planting trees but also taking care of them too. Most of the children have never planted trees before, so it was really fun being their first time.

Q. What top tips would you offer any upcoming young person interested in nature photography?

A. Always carry a camera or phone everywhere you go. You never know when there's going to be a photo opportunity.

Congratulations Shiru! She wins Ksh 3000.
Follow her on Instagram @Shiru.photography and @Kijani_World.

Season 2 of the Nature's Treasures Competition is ongoing!! Submit 3 photos on the theme '*DRAMATIC WILDLIFE*' by 26th October.

SUPPORT SHIRU NDEGWA

DONATE TODAY

Shiru Ndegwa an active member of Kijani World won the photography award four times over. Shiru wishes to donate her prize money to the children on her winning photos from Kiserian Primary School

PLEASE SUPPORT HER BY DONATING TOWARDS 7 FAMILIE AT

5,000

PER FAMILY

SEND MPESA **0722525742**

Join Shiru and the entire Kijani Gang team in supporting the children and their families in her winning photos.

Please send your contribution via M-PESA to her dad's number **0722525742** by the **18th of October** to help Kijani Gang raise Ksh 5000 for each family.

SUBMIT YOUR PHOTOS

NATURE'S TREASURES PHOTO COMPETITION

Theme: Dramatic Wildlife (Wildlife in Action/Wildlife Behaviour) (Oct 12th to Oct 26th)

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!

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

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

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

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

Go Out. Explore. Take Photos. Share.

BIRDS

Yellow - Necked Spurfowl photo by Sourish Trivedy (15 years)

- Birds are some of the most beautiful and amazing animals on earth.
- They have a beautiful collection of feathers, come in different sizes, and have a variety of calls and songs.
- Birds are a large group of warm-blooded vertebrate animals and they lay eggs.

Vocabulary:

Ornithology: the study of birds.

Vertebrates: Animals with a backbone

Warm-blooded: Animals with temperatures that are always constant.

Endemic: Native and restricted to a certain area

UNDERSTANDING BIRDS

- Birds are found in every continent, from the freezing cold regions of Antarctica, to the deserts, and flying above lakes and oceans.
- There are more than 10,000 species of birds in the world and over 1,100 bird species in Kenya.
- All birds lay eggs and have two legs, wings, feathers, and beaks or bills.

Purple Grenadier photo by Sidney Shema

- Birds range in size, from the largest bird, the ostrich, weighing more than 100kgs to the very small hummingbirds weighing less than 4 grams.

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT BIRDS

- All birds have wings and weathers, but not all birds can fly. Some bird species are flightless, like the Ostrich found in Africa and the Emu found in Australia
- Birds have lightweight bones and specially designed wings to fly easily.
- Hummingbirds lay the smallest eggs, the size of a pea.
- The largest bird egg is an ostrich egg weighing up to 1.3kgs.

Variable Sunbird photo by Evans Toroitich

- A bird's eye is nearly half the size of its head.
- Owls can rotate their necks a maximum of 270 degrees but cannot move their eyes.

Sokoke Scops Owls photo by Mustafa Adamjee

- The Peregrine Falcon is the fastest bird in flight.
- to speeds of up to 70 km per hour.
- Penguins are the only birds that walk upright and can swim but cannot fly.
- The Ostrich is the fastest bird on land and can run

WHY ARE BIRDS SPECIAL?

Birds are dinosaurs! They are the only group of dinosaurs that survived the mass extinction that wiped out all other dinosaurs about 65 million years ago

Egyptian Goose photo by Federico Genovese

Birds are our closest link to wildlife and nature. Unlike wild mammals, for example, which are generally hard to see in urban, some rural areas, and even in deserts, birds are found everywhere and very visibly. They are the wild animals that we see the most.

Little Egret photo by Kennedy Patrick

Birds connect us to the natural world in a way that no other group of animals does. The fact that they can fly also adds an element of wonder and mystery to them.

Birds can cross continental boundaries, for example, a bird that is usually only found in North America can fly to Africa to escape the winter season but a tiger or polar bear will not easily migrate to Kenya on its own.

PARTS OF A BIRD

FEATHERS

- Birds are covered in feathers instead of skin or fur.
- Feathers provide a waterproof layer for birds and act as an insulator for them to maintain high body temperatures

White-backed vulture drying off after its daily bath photo by Sidney Shema

HEART

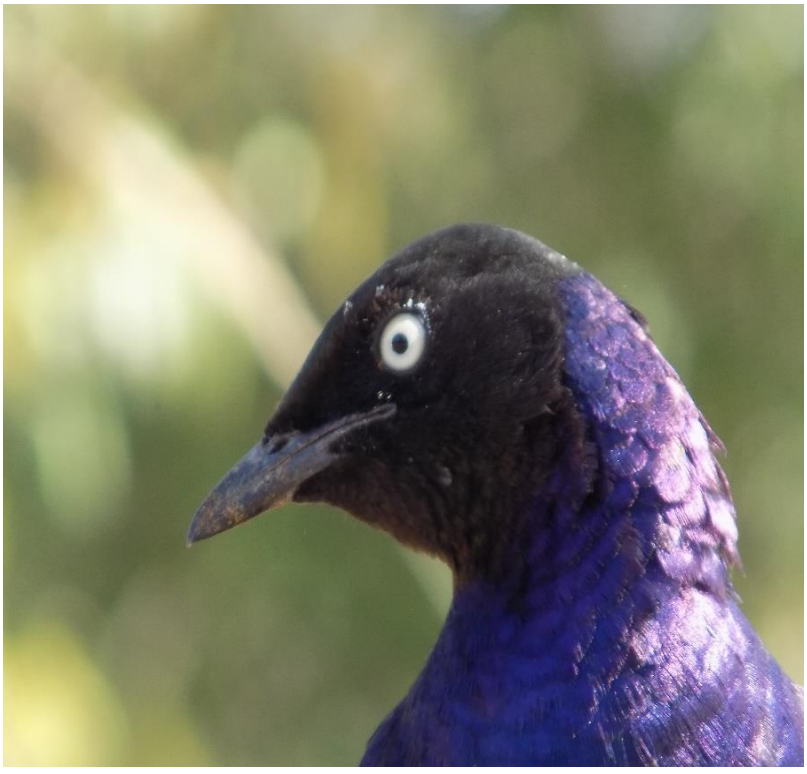
- Just like human beings, birds have a four-chambered heart that pumps blood very quickly through the bird's body to enable them to fly.
- More blood is supplied to the wing muscles as they work the hardest during flying.

LUNGS

- Birds have lungs and a system of air sacs.
- The air sacs make the birds lighter and help them to float in air or water.

EYES

- Birds cannot move their eyes much and so they have to turn their heads to look at an object.
- They are able to see a greater range of colors than people and can focus on two objects at the same time.



Picture Courtesy of Joy Omulupi

BONES

- A bird's bones are very lightweight but also very strong so that they do not break while they fly.
- The bones in a bird's legs and wings are hollow to provide space for tiny air sacs to float.
- Flightless birds like the ostrich have solid bones.

WHAT DO BIRDS EAT?

- Birds can be classified into different groups based on what they eat.
- Each bird species has different bills or beaks for feeding on different types of food.
- Herbivorous birds have short and strong beaks for eating grains, seeds, and grasses.

Ruppell's Griffon Vulture photo by Kalika Shah

- Carnivorous birds like eagles, hawks, and vultures have hooked bills for tearing meat from their prey.
- Insectivores are birds that only eat insects.
- Granivores are birds that only eat grains.
- Omnivorous birds eat almost anything, like hens.
- Frugivorous birds feed mainly on fruits, like parrots, hornbills and Turacos.

- Most aquatic birds have long and sharp bills to catch and hold fish before swallowing, fish-eating birds are known as Piscivores.

Saddle billed Stork in Nairobi National Park photo by Joy Omulupi

Grey Headed Kingfisher Photo by Tay Belcher

ENDEMIC BIRDS TO KENYA

Some birds species that are only found in Kenya include the following;

- Hinde's Babbler – Central Kenya highlands, mainly around Mt Kenya, but extends south and east to Nairobi, Machakos, Kitui, and Meru

Hinde's Babblers photo by Sidney Shema

- Kilifi (Clarke's) Weaver – Arabuko-Sokoke Forest and Dakatcha Woodland, Kilifi County.
- Sharpe's Longclaw – Highland grasslands in central Kenya, Uasin Gishu and Mt Elgon
- Taita Apalis, Taita Thrush and Taita White Eye birds – Taita Hills
- Aberdare Cisticola – Aberdares, Mau Narok, Molo Grasslands
- Williams's Lark – Rocky lava deserts in northern Kenya, mainly in the Dida-Galgalu and near Isiolo
- Kikuyu White-eye – Central Kenya highlands, including Nairobi
- Snowy (Brown-and-white) Barbet – Central Kenya highlands, including Nairobi

THREATS FACING BIRDS

The following are the main threats to birds around the world;

i. **Habitat loss and degradation** – Birds and other wild animals' homes are destroyed.

ii. **Bird poisoning** – Birds of prey such as vultures and eagles can be poisoned when they feed on poisonous carcasses. Grain eating birds can also be poisoned by harmful pesticides.

Greater Flamingo photo by Jason Collette

iii. **Electrocution and collision** with electricity lines and poles kill large birds like flamingoes, pelicans, and bustards.

iv. **Hunting** of migratory birds for food or sports.

v. **Invasive bird species** are also a big problem in some areas, such as the Kenya coast, where the invasive House crow is killing and displacing many of the local birds.

MEET THE EXPERT

Q. Tell us about yourself

A. My name is Sidney Shema. I grew up in Nairobi. I went to St. Mary's School, Oshwal Academy, and the University of Nairobi.

Counting water birds with friends in the Tana Delta

Q. How did you get interested in Birds and why?

A. I got introduced to bird watching in university. One of our lecturers gave a slideshow presentation with several birds and told us that identifying birds would be part of his exam.

This forced me to start learning about birds, and I was surprised at how enjoyable it was. I was introduced to Nature Kenya around the same time and started attending their weekly bird walks. My interest in birds has continued to grow since then.

Q: What does your work involve?

A: I coordinate the Kenya Bird Map project, which aims to map the distribution of all birds in Kenya.

Ringing an Olive Thrush at the Nairobi National Museum

My work involves training birders on how to collect records for the project, keeping them updated on the project's progress, verifying records, and coordinating with our various project partners.

I also do a few other projects, including bird ringing with the National Museums of Kenya and birds of prey research with various organizations. I also write about birds and wildlife on my website: shotsbyshema.com

Q: What is the most astounding part of your work?

A: I like that I get to visit many amazing places that I otherwise would have never gone to if I was not interested in birds.

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

A: To get into bird research and conservation, it is best to study zoology, wildlife management, conservation biology or related topics at the university.

Birding in Kora National Park

In primary and high school, topics like biology, geography, social studies, and maths are important. In addition to school, it helps a lot to join clubs and societies that are involved in conservation.

Some examples of these in Kenya include; Nature Kenya, Friends of Nairobi National Park, and the Wildlife Clubs of Kenya.

Q. Which is your favorite Bird and why?

A. My favorite bird is the Secretary bird. It is unique in many ways and is very entertaining to watch. It is like an eagle with long legs that searches for food by walking around on the ground instead of flying.

Secretary Bird in Nairobi National Park – Photo by Joy Omulupi

It kills its prey by giving it a powerful kick on the head, and this kick is so accurate that it even kills dangerous snakes like puff adders, cobras, and mambas

Do you know why it is called a Secretary Bird? Send your answer through WhatsApp text or photo to 0746 511 787

Q. How can you tell the difference between a male and female Bird?

In some birds, the male and female are easy to distinguish because they look very different in color and other features. A male ostrich, for example, is black and white while the female is a dull greyish-brown.

Female and Male Ostriches in Nairobi National Park – Photo by Joy Omulupi

Some birds however don't show such differences and telling the male and female apart can be difficult.

Do you have a favorite bird? Please send us a picture, drawing or painting through WhatsApp to 0746 511 787

VULTURINE GUINEAFOWL

- Vulturine Guineafowls mainly eats seeds and don't drink water.
- Their source of water is termites found in elephant dung.

Vulturine Guineafowl by Ken Gitau

Learn more about Vulturine Guineafowls in this episode of Wildlife Warriors here
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=waYA6wiUSRU

WILD JOKES!

Q: What time do ducks wake up?

A: At the Quack of dawn

Q: Which birds spend all their time on their knees?

A: Birds of Prey

Q: What do you give sick birds?

A: Tweetment

Q: What do you call two birds in love?

A: Tweet-hearts

Q: Do birds always know exactly where they are going?

A: Nope! Sometimes they just wing it

Q: What do you call a sad bird?

A: A Bluebird

Q: What did the duck do after he had read all these jokes?

Wild jokes courtesy of Joy Omulupi

A: He quacked up!

ART FOR WILDLIFE

A student coloring a hippo drawing 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, Painting, Poem or Essay on WhatsApp to 0746 511 787.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP NATURE

Take part in citizen science through bird watching

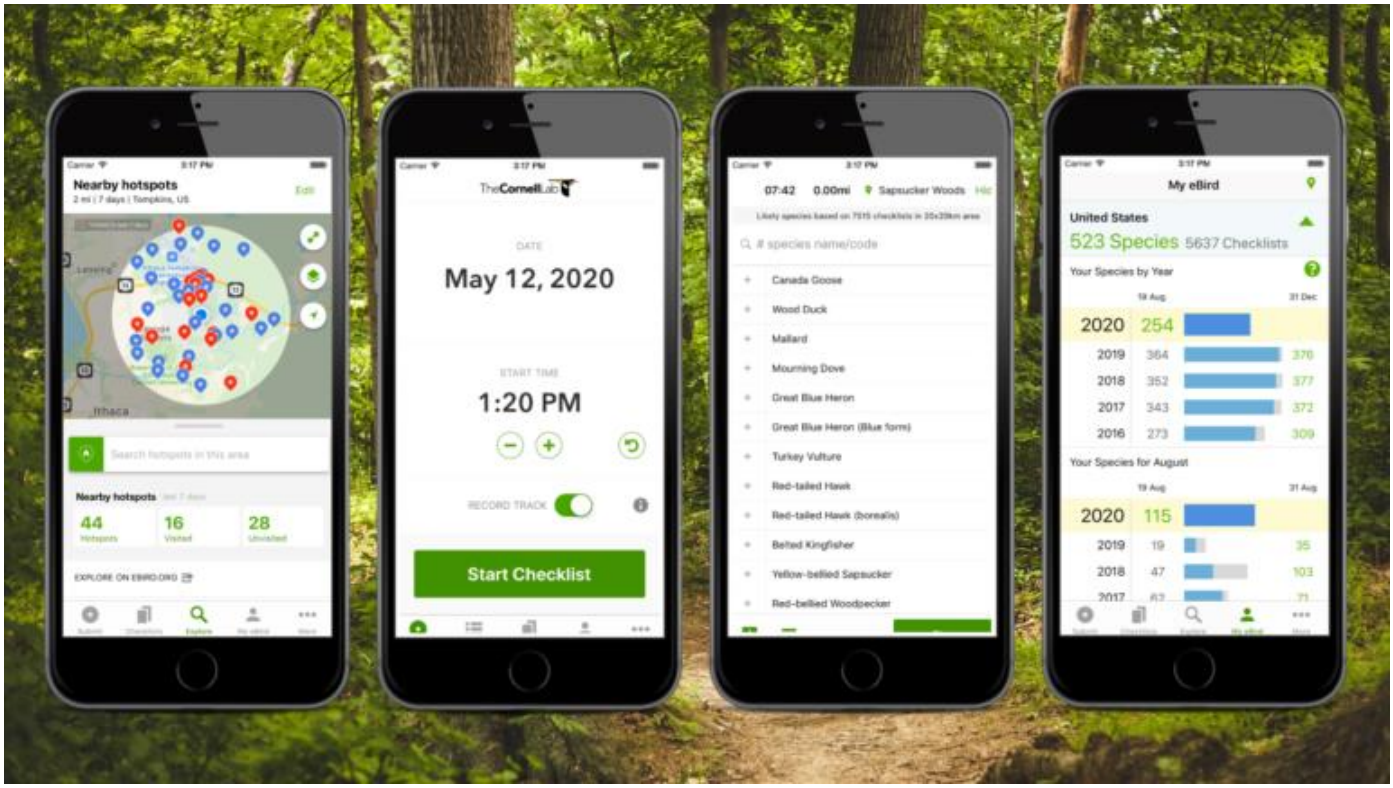
Birds are all around us. They are beautiful and you will always see them stop to feed around our homes as they sing in the morning and evening.

With over 10,000 species of birds around the world, you can help birds by going for bird watching.

This is a great activity that allows children and adults to enjoy and appreciate nature anywhere; from our backyard to the bushes, to the forests and even in our towns.

GLOBAL BIG DAY - OCTOBER 2020

Big Days are a 24 hour opportunity to celebrate the birds both near you and around the world.
Get an eBird account, watch birds and enter what you see or hear using the eBird App.



By taking part in Birding this weekend, you will support Birdlife International's appeal to end illegal bird trade.

To learn how you can participate click;
https://ebird.org/news/october-big-day-2020-bigger-than-ever

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 GLOBAL BIG DAY

This weekend is an opportunity to celebrate all 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.

THIS WEEK ON MY WILD AFRICA

A cheetah's life in captivity is up to 20-years-old. Shadow, an ambassador cheetah at the Cheetah Outreach Centre in South Africa, is 13-years-old and healing from his surgery will be a remarkable comeback.

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

- My Wild Africa on Citizen TV every Sunday at 5:30pm.
- Global Big Day - October 17th, 2020.
- World Fish Migration Day – October 24th 2020
- World Okapi Day - October 18,2020
- National Reptile Awareness Day - October 21, 2020.

FOR PARENTS

This newsletter is issued each week to inform, inspire and encourage children who are at home during COVID 19 school closure.

It is distributed completely free of charge to children and their parents anywhere in Kenya, Africa and the world. If you would love to contribute to the Wildlife Warriors Kids, please make a donation to:

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A/C NO. 0100003937598

Email us: info@wildlifedirect.org

Contact us on: +254 746 511 787

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