Hello Wildlife Warriors!
Stay connected to nature even when you are at home.
Welcome to Issue 25! We feature Hyenas! Did you know that despite looking like dogs, hyenas are not members of the dog or cat families? Discover which family they belong to!

We also meet one of the Nature’s Treasures Photo Competition junior winner and explore actions we can do to take of nature. We have 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.
Hanain Ayub (15 years old) from Kenya is the runner-up in the Wildlife Warriors Nature’s Treasures Photo Competition Junior Category on the theme “Dramatic Wildlife” for a remarkable photo of a wildebeest on the move.

‘Leaps of faith’

The Judges were intrigued by the photo, which captured an amazing moment.
Q & A with Hanain about his image…

Q. What is the story behind this image?

A. I was in the Maasai Mara during the wildebeest migration where the wildebeests were headed towards the river running along a path with a steep edge.

Since they were many, some got pushed over the steep edge. It was hard to find a position to take a shot of this marvel, but I got a lucky shot and I took it.

Congratulations Hanain! He wins Ksh. 1000.

This is his fourth win.

Follow him on Instagram; @hanain_
We are going to learn interesting facts about hyenas and the amazing role they play in nature.

- Hyenas are always under-appreciated and misunderstood by many people and considered inferior scavengers that get their food by stealing from other animals.

**VOCABULARY:**

- **Clan** - A group of hyenas
- **Matriarch** - The Alpha female who is the most powerful and leads the clan
- **Litter** - Group of baby hyenas
- **Den** - The hyena home; usually underground in a burrow
Understanding Hyenas

- They are carnivores which means that they eat meat. They are related to other carnivores such as the big cats and wild dogs, however they have their own special family called **Hyaenidae**.

**Why they are important and their role in nature!**

- Hyenas clean sites and prevent the spread of diseases by scavenging on remains of animal kills that would otherwise litter the environment or poison other animals.
- By preying on other animals, they help control animal populations.

There are 4 species in the Hyaenidae family. These are: **Spotted Hyenas, Brown Hyenas, Striped Hyenas, and Aardwolves**.
1. Spotted Hyenas (*Crocuta crocuta*)

- They are also known as *Laughing Hyenas*. Why? They communicate with yells, whoops, and cackles that can be heard up to 5 km away!
- Although they are known to steal and eat leftovers of other predators, Hyenas are super-skilled hunters and hunt for 90% of their own food.
- Hyenas mostly hunt in groups and can take down big animals like wildebeest, zebras, and even giraffes.
- They have super-strong jaws and teeth, therefore can eat every part of their meal except the horns.
- They have large hearts and the ability to lose heat quickly that allows them to chase their prey for a long time.
They are the largest in size of all the other hyenas with an average weight of between 40 to 86 kgs.

They live in socially complex groups called Clans, of 3-90 hyenas. Clan size depends on prey available.

Just like elephants, female spotted hyenas stay with the clans they were born led by a Matriarch which is the strongest female.

Spotted hyenas have a litter of one, two or rarely three pups after a gestation period of 110 days.

The spotted hyena milk has the highest protein content of any other carnivore.
2. Striped hyenas (*Hyaena hyaena*)

- In Swahili they are called **Fisi Miraba**.
- They are found in West, North and East Africa, Middle East and Central Asia.
- Striped Hyenas are smaller, with dark lines down their light fur and fluffy manes, shyer, and less social than the Spotted Hyena.
- The front legs of a striped hyena are longer than the hind limbs giving them a unique moving style.
- Striped hyenas are always quiet but may growl, make loud screeches, or raise their manes to looks nearly twice their size when upset or scared.
- They have powerful jaws and teeth that can scavenge on parts of carcasses by crushing bones, hooves, left behind by other animals.
Brown hyenas are the rarest and the second largest of the four species. They are found in Namibia, Botswana, Western and Southern Zimbabwe, Southern Mozambique, and South Africa. They have long shaggy coats with pointed ears, short broad muzzle with powerful jaws and strong teeth. The have a sloping appearance as their front legs are longer than the hind legs. Brown hyenas do not hunt in groups. They can survive for several days without water.
Aardwolves are insectivorous mammals of Africa. They have dark stripes and manes running along their backs making them resemble small striped Hyenas. Unlike the carnivorous hyenas that hunt and eat large animals, aardwolves track and dig insects off the ground. Aardwolves have tough, sticky tongues that protect them from termite bites and secretions. They lead mainly solitary lives to fiercely defend their territories for food and mates. They are socially monogamous – they stay with the same mate their whole lives.

Despite being thought as foolish, hyenas are very intelligent.

Hyena cubs are born with their eyes open, grown teeth and muscles that can allow them to move. They completely depend on their mother’s milk for the first six months.

Hyenas and lions are fierce competitors as they fight over the same territories and hunt the same prey.
I was born in Washington, D.C. in the USA. I went to primary school in Maryland and the University of Miami in Florida (USA).

After university, I wasn’t sure if I wanted to go to graduate school for a PhD. I spent three years doing a variety of jobs at horse ranches, as a conservation researcher intern at the Memphis Zoo in Tennessee, and as a research assistant for the Mara Hyena Project in Kenya.
Q. How did you get interested in Hyenas?

I’ve been an animal lover for as long as I can remember! I always loved going to the zoo and watching the deer’s in the forest when I was little, and I knew that I wanted to study wild animals when I grew up. Hyenas caught my eye because they are ‘weird’ for mammals. I was extremely curious to understand how hyena behaviour evolved, so I applied to Michigan State University to study them for my PhD research.
Q: What is unique about hyenas?

A: The females are larger than males and dominant to males and they live in very complex social systems that are similar to primates.

When the females have cubs, you can see their nipples and this also affects the shape of their bellies.

Adult females tend to have sloping bellies while adult males curve up at the back.

I did these drawings of an adult female (top) and adult male (bottom) hyena that illustrates these differences.
Q. How many Hyenas are there in the world? How many in Kenya?

A: Researchers estimate there may be between 27,000 and 47,000 spotted hyenas globally. Spotted hyenas are very abundant in the Mara-Serengeti ecosystem in Kenya and Tanzania with at least 1000 hyenas in the Kenyan half of the Mara-Serengeti.

Q. What is some of the research work you do?

A: We study Hyena behaviour and take blood samples from some individuals. We use blood samples for genetic and hormone analyses.

Sylvia is a sub adult male hyena that the research assistants darted to take blood and measurements of his form and structure.
We also study them to test their intelligence using puzzle boxes with meat inside.

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

Someone interested in studying hyenas should plan to get a Bachelor of Science degree in a field like Biology. Next, getting hands on experience is important, volunteering or getting hired as a research assistant with any carnivore species will be helpful to gain research and fieldwork skills.
Finally, most conservationists have either a Master's degree or PhD in Biology, Zoology, or another wildlife related field. Find a scientist studying hyenas and contact them to get involved. There are many researchers studying hyenas in Kenya and throughout Africa.

Spotted Hyena cooling down in the water; Photo by Joy Omulupi

Share with us what you’re doing by taking a picture/video or text and share via WhatsApp to; 0746 511 787
Q: What did the Hyena take on its flight?
A: A Carrion Bag.

Q: Did you hear about the Hyena who drank a pint of gravy?
A: He was a laughing stock!

Q: What did the hyena do on pay day?
A: It laughed all the way to the bank.

Q: I was once attacked by a laughing Hyena.
A: It's not as funny as it sounds.

Q: Hyenas hate Spirit airlines.
A: They are too cheap to pay for carrion luggage.

Q: I've once said that I hate Hyenas
A: But I'll be lion if I said that
1. A group of hyenas is called ___________.

2. How many members are in the hyena family?
   a) 3  b) 4  c) 5  d) 2

3. Which animal are enemies with the hyenas?
   a) Wild dogs  b) Cheetah  c) Lions  d) Vultures

4. The aardwolf is a wolf?
   a) True  b) False

5. What is the other name for the spotted hyena?
   a) Cheetah hyena  b) Laughing hyena  c) Wolf hyena

6. What does the Aardwolf feed on?
   a) Animal meat  b) Birds  c) Insects

Please send us your Answer on WhatsApp to 0746 511 787.
Inkoisuk Primary School is located in Kajiado South, about 55kms from Loitokitok town in Kajiado County. This project was started with the sole purpose of teaching the young generation about environmental conservation.

The Inkoisuk Eco-forest was started as part of Wildlife Warriors Kids Club activities in connecting the young people to value, appreciate and nurture nature.

At the moment, the club has planted over 2,000 trees both indigenous and exotic in the school. The school also reuses water from the school kitchen to water...
The Inkoisuk Wildlife Warriors Club Motto is "every tree has a story" meaning that each tree planted has a story to it and is remembered by an occasion. Mr. Harrison Karanja, the school Deputy Head Teacher and Wildlife Warriors Club patron believes that the project will be a model for other schools.

The Wildlife Warriors club members at Inkoisuk Primary school are on a mission to grow a forest in their school.

To achieve this, they did the following:

Step 1. Established a tree nursery inside their school.
Step 2. Planted the trees seedlings and watered the trees.

Share with us what you have done to help nature this week by sending an SMS or WhatsApp to 0746 511 787
Step 3. Taking care of the trees by watering regularly.

Step 4. Harvest your food when it is ready! Teacher Harrison with a banana ready for harvest.

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How many animals can you name from the drawing?

Please send a photo of your Drawing, Painting, Poem or Essay on WhatsApp to 0746 511 787.
Have you ever seen a shark? Most sharks live for about 25 years, while some can live to be a 100 years. Sharks do not have a single bone in their bodies, instead they have a skeleton made up of cartilage. Cartilage is a tough material, like the material that shapes your ear.

Discover more about sharks 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

- My Wild Africa on CITIZEN TV every Sunday at 5:30 pm EAT.

- World Fisheries Day – 21st November

- International Cheetah Day – 4th December
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:

**PAYBILL NO. 600100**

**A/C NO: 0100003937598**

Email us: [info@wildlifedirect.org](mailto:info@wildlifedirect.org)

Contact us on: +254 746 511 787

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