WILDLIFEDIRECT

Newsletter
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WILDLIFE WARRIORS KIDS

Hello Wildlife Warriors!
We invite you to stay connected to nature at home and in school.

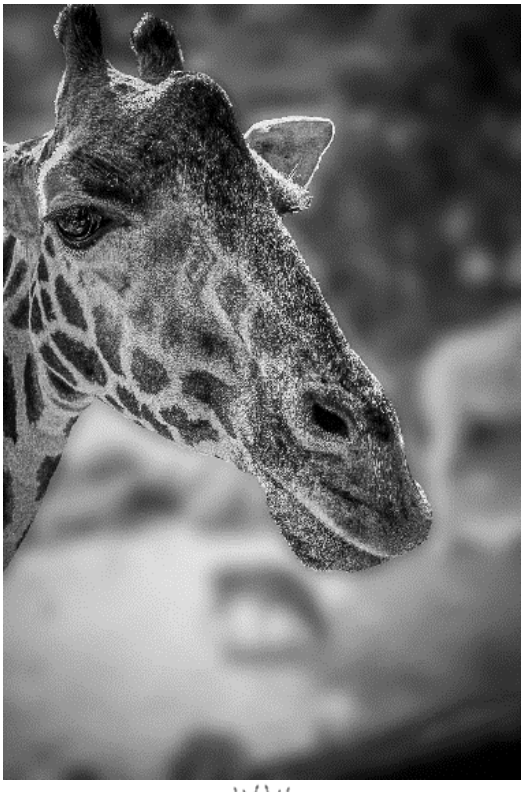
Happy New Year!

In our first issue of the year, we meet an outstanding Wildlife Warrior. We learn why she cares about wildlife, her vision for young people and for conservation. We will also meet young photographers, see the amazing activities Wildlife Warriors club members are doing in their schools and have fun sharing and learning about nature … **Please read on!**

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

JUNIOR PHOTOGRAPHER HIGHLIGHT

Nicky Musau participated in the Nature's Treasures Photo Competition. Here are some of his striking images.



Q & A WITH NICKY MUSAU

Q. How old are you?

I am 16 years old

Q. Which camera do you use?

I use Canon 7D Mark ii.

Q. What do you like about nature photography?

A. Nature photography helps to raise the profile of our planet and the environment. It allows people to experience things they may not see themselves. Therefore, it encourages people to care about its preservation.

Q. What advice do you have for young and upcoming photographers?

A. Be yourself, get up early, and don't try too hard, as whatever is trying to come out will do eventually without any effort, learn to trust your instincts and don't think about what others will think or about the process too much. Work hard but enjoy it.

Follow Nicky on Instagram @nickymusau

KENYA'S NATURAL RESOURCES

Covering a size of 580,000 sq. kms, Kenya is the 48th largest country in the world.

Very many plants and fungi, invertebrates, mammals, birds, reptile and amphibian species are found in national parks, reserves, private conservancies, and within our communities lands.

- About 8% of Kenya is protected for wildlife conservation.
- The area consists of landscapes/seascapes divided into ecosystems namely; Savannah, Forests, Wetlands, Marine, Arid and Semi-arid land.

Did you know that Kenya has 23 national parks, 28 national reserves, 4 marine parks, 6 marine reserves, 4 sanctuaries and 160 wildlife conservancies?

OUR FORESTS

Kenya's forest cover is currently less than 7% This is made up of indigenous trees and forest plantations.

Forests in Kenya are classified into four major types. These are:-

- Western rainforests - Kakamega and Nandi forests
- Montane forests - Mt. Kenya, Aberdares, Mau, Mt. Elgon, Mathews ranges and Chyulu hills.

Dr. Paula Kahumbu and community members in Loita forest, one of Kenya's water towers.

- Coastal forests - Arabuko Sokoke, Dakatcha, Shimba hills, Boni and Kayas.
- Dryland forests - Hill tops in Eastern and Northern Kenya and Lake Victoria regions.

ACHIEVING 10 % FOREST COVER

- The country has 18 registered water towers that are under enormous threat from deforestation.
- Water towers are the most important source of water for human consumption, for use in industries and also to sustain other living things.
- To conserve and restore our forests, millions of trees need to be planted across the country each year.

Kakenia Jacob (Inkoisuk Primary School - Grade 4) loosening the roots of a tree seedling to plant in their school compound.

- By growing trees in our communities, schools and along the roads, we can help reach the 10% tree cover by 2022.
- Learn more about trees; plant the right type and ensure their growth into forests.
- When we grow forests, we contribute towards securing a great environment for the future generations.

OUR WILD ANIMALS

Kenya is famed for the "Big Five"; Elephant, Lion, Rhino, Buffalo, and Leopard.

There are a total of 390 species of mammals that have been identified in Kenya. The highest number of mammal species consist of rodents and bats.

Do you know how many species of bats are in found in Kenya?

Humpback Whales migrate to the Kenyan coast around August to breed and nurse their calves.

Despite having so much wildlife in our country, many Kenyans have never visited our parks and reserves to see them.

OTHER WILDLIFE SPECIES IN KENYA

Have you ever thought of the number of bird species we have in Kenya? There are more than 1000 bird species in Kenya.

Have you ever seen this bird before? The Lilac-Breasted Roller found in many parts of Kenya.

Next time you are out exploring, look out for it.

Other species of wildlife in Kenya include:

"The Ugly Five": Marabou Stork, Spotted Hyena, Warthog, Wildebeest and the White-backed Vulture.

"The Northern Five": Reticulated Giraffe, Somali Ostrich, Gerenuk, Grevy's Zebra and the Beisa Oryx. These are the commonly seen northern Kenya.

Which National Park, Reserve or Conservancy have you visited and what did you see?
WhatsApp answer to +254 746 511 787

THREATS FACING WILDLIFE

Wildlife in Kenya is under great threat because many people have not had an experience with wildlife and therefore do not appreciate their existence.
These threats are:

- **Habitat loss** –Deforestation and animals loosing their homes due to human activities.

- **Poaching-** Some people kill wildlife for their meat;
- **Pollution** – Animals living in our landscapes, lakes and oceans die from solid waste, water and air pollution;
- **Human-Wildlife Conflict** – Most wildlife in Kenya are found outside protected areas and are threatened by humans when they invade their farms.

- **Climate change**; Leads to long droughts, rise in ocean temperatures and storms that destroy wildlife habitats.
- **Invasive plant and animal species;** an introduced plant or animal that threatens other organisms.

Wildlife Warriors club members from different schools during the 2019 expedition at Mpala Research Centre, Laikipia.

By learning about our natural treasures around our homes and in protected areas, we gain an understanding of the threats they are facing and how we can take action to protect them.

MEET DR. PAULA KAHUMBU

Q. Tell us a little about yourself.

A. I was born in Nairobi and grew up on the edge of the city in a forested area where we had wild animals all around us. I was a tom boy and spent most of my childhood outdoors climbing trees, swimming in streams and exploring forests.

I went on my first expedition when I was 15. It was a one month 1,000 km hike across deserts and up mountains in northern Kenya around Lake Turkana. That's when I fell in love with science, nature and conservation and dreamed of becoming a ranger.

Instead, I went to university to study biology and geography and specialized in research on monkeys and then elephants. I love science, exploration and conservation.

Q. What do you do and what does your work involve?

Dr. Kahumbu with staff & volunteers during a trip to NNP in 2019

A. I am now the CEO of WildlifeDirect and I manage a team of hard working Kenyans who make films, manage an education program, and fight wildlife crime.

Dr. Kahumbu with the Wildlife Warriors TV series Crew

Q. What do you love about your work?

A. I love being in nature, it is amazing, exciting, inspiring and it's a world of discovery. I love my work because I spend a lot of time in nature.

I also love that I can make meaningful contributions in saving wildlife.

Q. Why do you want children to be involved in conservation?

A. Children who grow up in cities without access to nature can become depressed, disconnected and often feel helpless as though their lives are meaningless. Children who grow up in natural areas are creative, compassionate, empathetic and solution oriented. Which would you like to be? We want all kids to feel excited about life and to aspire to be great.

The world is changing so fast that it's hard to keep up and it's easy to be overwhelmed with the problems and to feel as if they are too big to make a difference. We see people living in trash and feeling as if it's futile to bother cleaning up. This is a downward spiral that makes life worse and worse.

This is why learning in nature can make such a big difference - because small actions can have huge impacts as nature is able to recover - just remove pollution from going into a pond and an incredible diversity of life will flourish, water will be clean, animals will sing and we will have good fresh healthy food, air and water to drink. It's as simple as that.

Nandi looking out for wildlife in Amboseli National Park

Q. What is your vision for kids in conservation?

A. Courageous wildlife warriors

Q. What can kids do to make a difference?

- Clean up litter and dispose of it properly
- Plant the right trees for locations
- Never stop learning, never stop looking for solutions, never stop helping,

- Go out doors, explore nature (nests, trees, under stones, in the bushes and trees, observe and be curious and learn from nature (write down what you see, smell, feel and hear). Her classes are free.
- Get your parents and friends involved and excited about nature as you are.

Q. What is the one thing you feel that every kid must do at least once a year for nature, wildlife or conservation?

A. Go camping and sleep under the stars!

Q. How can parents help?

A. Parents must support their children by giving them the freedom to explore nature.

Q. Your Parting shot?

A. I went on my first expedition at age 15, I want Kenyan kids to go on their first expedition by age 8.

Children from schools in Nairobi learning about nature during a trip to NNP in 2019

Do you have a Question for Dr. Kahumbu? Send your comments or questions on **WhatsApp to:- +254 746 511 787** or **Email; info@wildlifedirect.org**

NYAMNINIA PRIMARY SCHOOL WILDLIFE WARRIORS

Nyamninia Primary School club representatives at the Wildlife Warriors 2019 Kids Expedition in Laikipia. ©Alex Mbaiyo

Nyamninia Primary School is located in Gem sub-county, Siaya county. It has a population of 608 pupils led by Tr. Florence Akinyi Ong'anda.

The Nyamninia Wildlife Warriors club started in August 2018 and has 155 members.

The club projects and activities include; tree and grass growing, essay writing, watching wildlife films and creating public awareness on importance of wildlife.

Nyamninia Wildlife Warriors Tree Growing Project

Nyamninia Primary School club chairperson Paul addressing Bar Sauri Primary pupils

The Nyamninia Wildlife Warriors club members have also shared what they learn with parents and friends in the neighboring school, Bar Sauri Primary School.

Their Motto:

Learning about nature is fun and exciting. We motivate all to appreciate and nurture it.

Share with us what you are doing to help nature by sending your pictures, videos, or text via WhatsApp to:- +254 746 511787

NAIROBI NATIONAL PARK

Nairobi National park is "The World's only Wildlife Capital" and the first national park to be established in Kenya on December 16, 1946.

- The park is home to over 100 mammal species, four of the Big Five (Rhino, Lion, Buffalo and Leopard).
- Nairobi National Park is a major rhino sanctuary for breeding and restocking other wildlife parks.
- More than 400 bird species with at least 20 seasonal birds migrating from Europe.
- Has a spectacular wildebeest and zebra migration.
- Is home to the Ivory Burning Site Monument, Nairobi Safari Walk and Orphanage

NAIROBI NATIONAL PARK

Families and schools visit the park for game drives, picnics, bird watching, video and film production.

The park is less than 10 kms from the city center.

Despite Nairobi having a population of over 4.3 million people, many people have not visited the park.

To learn more about Nairobi National Park. Visit;
http://www.kws.go.ke/parks/nairobi-national-park

ART FOR WILDLIFE

Wildlife Warriors students in an art session during the 2019 camping expedition at Mpala Research Centre in Laikipia

Do you have a drawing or photo that you would like to share? Please send a **photo** of your **Drawing**, **Painting**, **Poem** or **Essay** on **WhatsApp** to **+254 746 511 787.**

CALL TO ACTION

Do you know a CHILD, SCHOOL, CLUB or CHILDREN'S HOME taking active action on mitigating CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION. NOMINATE them for GREEN KIDS AWARDS 2021 which is Now Open.

Submit your nominations via email to greenkidsawards@gmail.com

THIS WEEK ON MY WILD AFRICA

The Glade in Ruaha National Park is a paradise where there is always water, a place where strange things happen. As the dry season continues in Ruaha, herds of elephants arrive in the Glade. They dig deep into the sand with their trunks to tap the cleanest waters. The Glade pride copy the elephants -unusual behavior, but not in the Glade.

Tune in this Sunday only on Citizen TV Kenya 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 **+254 746 511787**

COMING UP… DON'T MISS

- International Zebra Day – January 31st 2021

FOR PARENTS

This newsletter is now issued twice a month to inform, inspire and encourage children to continue valuing nature.

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 511787

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