

Wildlife Club Africa (WCA) project celebrates World Wetlands Day (WWD) Celebrations 2011

On the 2nd February 2011 the world celebrated World Wetlands Day (WWD). It was the anniversary of the signing of the Ramsar Convention for protection of wetlands in 1971 in the Iranian City of Ramsar. This year was the 40th anniversary.

The Wetlands Celebration is annual and so various authorities including schools, academic institutions, groups and individuals people all around the world undertake actions to raise awareness on the values of Wetlands as well as the important role human beings play in sustainable utilization of wetlands resources. The theme for this year's celebration was "Forests and Wetlands"

At the Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania, commemorations of WWD 2011 started early before the climax date of 2nd Feb. Pre-celebrations were organised on 28th January by conducting an annual Water Fowl count. More than twenty people (mostly youth and students) participated.



On 5th February, WCST organized a wetlands exhibition for school children in collaboration with the National Museum and House of Culture. 107 pupils and students from twelve schools in Dar Es Salaam participated in this celebration that took place at the National Museum grounds. The activities were financially supported by Wildlife Club Africa (WCA) Project of which all twelve schools are project members.

The children had an early morning walk at the City Botanical Garden where lessons on various plant species and significance were given. Highlighted were wetlands' plant species that are important for conservation and biodiversity improvement. The children walked to the National Museum grounds where the special Wetlands exhibition had been prepared in the popular exhibition hall for marine collections.

Special posters about wetland resources like vegetation, fresh water streams and tourism potentials were displayed. Other wetland materials on coral reefs, animal and fish diversity, as well as water birds were also displayed. Unsustainable human practices on wetland ecosystems were very much discouraged by displaying posters showing improper discharge of sewage into wetlands, mining activities, poor wetlands agricultural practices, and destruction of mangrove vegetation.

The Poster exhibition was guided by experienced staff from the National Museum and from WCST. Pupils were provided with note-books and pens for capturing information and were actively involved in questions and answers throughout the exhibitions.



A Power-point presentation was made last in order to summarise the information given to children as well as attending their queries. The presentation was more pictorial than words in order to enable children to visualise some of the key issues of livelihood in wetland ecosystems in the country and in other parts of the world. The children were very enthusiastic seeing that livelihood issues such as sanitation, agriculture

and information technology are all integrated with wetlands management. Children asked for more audio-visual presentations on other issues of wise use of resources and biodiversity to be arranged for them. They particularly asked the organisers to bring them the “Crimsons Wings”, a film about the lives of Lesser Flamingos in Lake Natron. Some of the schools had an opportunity to see the film prior to Wetlands Day 2011.

Annual Water fowl Count

The January Waterfowl Count was conducted along the shores of Indian Ocean from Dar es Salaam City to Bagamoyo town in the Coast region, a coastal stretch of approximately 70km in length of which four important coastal sites were surveyed. Kigamboni, Ocean Road, and White Sand Beach in Dar es Salaam and the Bagamoyo Salt Pans in Bagamoyo.

A total of 2060 waterfowls were identified and counted. The counting team in White Sands area was led by Calvin Pascal; other members were Samwel Chambo and Sunday Mrope. At Ocean Road, the team leader was Neil Baker; other members included Elizabeth Baker and Filbert Michael. The Bagamoyo Salt pans was counted under the leadership of Nsajigwa Kyonjola; other team members were Justine Gwegime and Amani Kigogo; and finally the Kigamboni team was comprised of Peter Zacharia and Stanslaus Fabian led by Abbas Jazza.

Number of Waterfowls by Species at Four Coast Sites in Tanzania, January 2011

SN	Species name	Kigamboni	Ocean road	White sands	Bagamoyo salt pans	Total
1	Great Cormorant	-	7	-	-	7
2	Long-tailed Cormorant	-	-	3	1	4
3	Cattle Egret	-	-	15	-	15
4	Little Egret	22	-	-	1	23
5	Dimorphic Egret	19	33	6	-	58

6	Black Heron	-	26	3	-	29
7	Great Egret	-	-	-	2	2
8	Grey Heron	5	12	1	-	18
9	Black-headed Heron	-	-	4	3	7
10	Hamerkop	-	7	-	1	8
11	Yellow-billed Stork	-	33	-	-	33
12	Sacred Ibis	-	50	29	-	79
13	Greater Flamingo	-	83	27	163	273
14	African Jacana	-	12	-	-	12
15	Grey-crowned Crane	-	12	-	-	12
16	Black-winged Stilt	-	-	9	-	9
17	Crab Plover	197	39	18	-	254
18	Eurasian Oystercatcher	-	-	3	-	3
19	Water Thick-knee	-	-	1	15	16
20	Long-toed Lapwing	-	-	7	-	7
21	Ringed Plover	92	40	6	-	138
22	Little ringed Plover	-	-	-	9	9
23	Caspian Plover	-	-	4	-	4
24	Grey Plover	80	19	2	-	101
25	Black-winged Plover	-	-	-	50	50
26	Ruff	-	8	-	-	8
27	Common Sandpiper	-	-	-	340	340
28	Common Greenshank	11	12	-	-	23
29	Little Stint	50	71	-	10	131
30	Curlew Sandpiper	27	-	-	-	27
31	Whimbrel	98	58	-	-	156
32	Black-headed Gull	-	17	-	-	17
33	Lesser Black-backed Gull	20	-	-	-	20
34	Lesser Crested Tern	40	-	-	-	40
35	Caspian Tern	-	-	-	73	73
36	Gull-billed Tern	38	13	-	-	51
37	White-winged Black Tern	-	-	3	-	3
38	Total					2060

Most of species, nearly 25 were seen at Ocean Road areas confirming its status as a world renowned site. Many birders would travel to Dar es Salaam to see the Crab Plovers which was seen Thirty nine times at Ocean Road. The species was also sighted at White Sands Beach (18 individuals) and Kigamboni (197 individuals).

Greater Flamingos were found at Ocean Road (61), White Sands (27) and Bagamoyo Salt Pans (163). No Flamingos were seen at Kigamboni. The most commonly seen bird that day was the Common Sandpiper. A flock of about 340 was seen at the Bagamoyo Salt Pans.