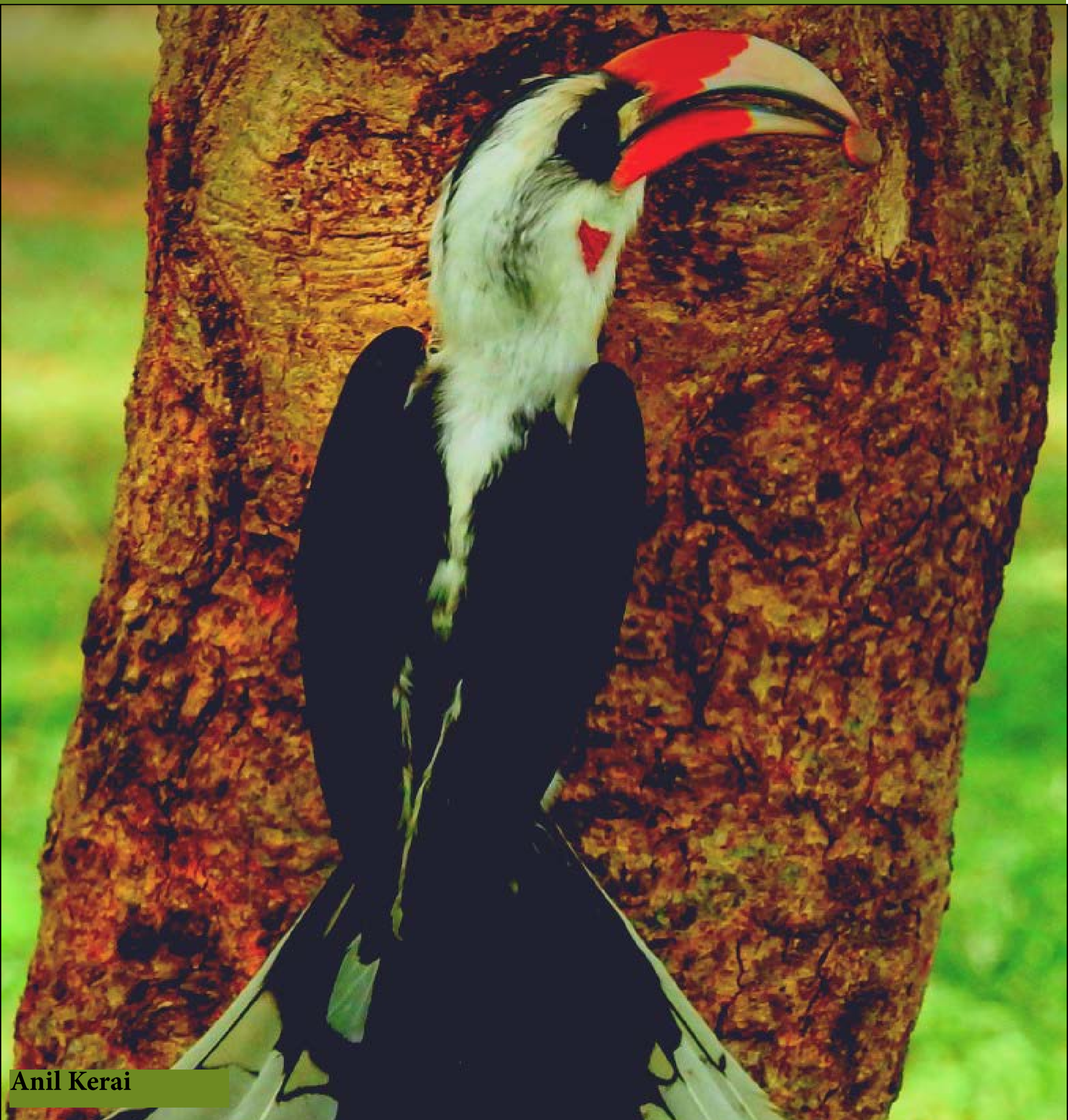




FRIENDS OF NAIROBI NATIONAL PARK



Anil Kerai

NAIROBI NATIONAL PARK NEWS - MARCH 2022

33RD EDITION NEWSLETTER

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Olga Levani Ercolano

Content, articles & photos sourced, edited and compiled by Mutwiri Felix

Dear FoNNaP Members,

It is a great honor and privilege to serve in FoNNaP as your Chairperson. FoNNaP celebrates over 25 years of existence since its inception in 1995. The society was established to support the welfare of wildlife in Nairobi National Park and work with communities adjacent to the park to help develop and implement conservation projects in and around the park.

We remain committed to an inclusive conservation strategy allowing wildlife and communities to co-exist and to maintain an open ecosystem for Nairobi National Park.

It is significant to establish an active membership which we shall achieve by tapping the energy and powers within each one of us. We are all significant in support of key FoNNaP events especially fundraising efforts in order to achieve our common goals and objectives.

This year we are strategizing on ensuring our membership is actively involved at all levels whilst recognizing their varied interests in choosing to be part of the membership. Through this form of inclusivity, we will try to ensure that all members from the youths, Birders, Researchers and the Advocacy teams are considered. The Board I welcome you all through this journey.

In regard to the membership, it is important that we keep growing if we really want to remain on the move. The board hopes to initiate monthly membership drives at various destinations which we invite the membership to support. Also, it is my humble reminder to the members whose membership is due to consider making their renewals as we move forward.

Warm Regards, Davinder Sikand
Chairperson- FoNNaP Board

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Fifteen years ago, the global human population tipped from being a majority rural to a majority urban species. Since then, the trend has only continued. By the middle of this century, it is anticipated that around 70 per cent of the global population will be living in towns and cities, as people evacuate rural regions in favour of the economic, cultural and social powerhouses of urban centres. Nairobi and other African cities know about this better than most, as the capital strains under immense pressure to accommodate ever larger numbers of people.

This rapid global urbanism of humanity makes it all the most important that governments, mayors, and residents think about the role of nature in our cities. Studies from all over the world emphasise how the association with wild animals, the songs of native birds, the smell of forest trees, the presence of colourful plants and accompanying insects, the sound of flowing water, the spectacular sight of the starry night sky... all these and other connections to nature have a profound (and almost universally positive) impact upon both our health and happiness.

For all this, Nairobi residents can be grateful to have such a special feature as Nairobi National Park. As part of the research into the new book I'm writing about nature in cities, I recently travelled to Kenya to experience for myself the impact that the park has upon the rest of the city. Working with FoNNAP, I wanted to know what challenges come from having so much large, and sometimes troublesome, wildlife right in the heart of the city, as well as what benefits come from this very unique situation.

My experience was stimulating, and very fulfilling. Before my travel, my concern was that I would find a large zoo, essentially an open-plan version of what I could experience at, for example, London Zoo. But this turned out not to be the case at all. It was a revelation to learn about the transitional nature of wildlife in Nairobi National Park, the way that the animals move in and out of the park, and how they interact with the wider ecosystem of East Africa. In a world where so many species have had their habitats squeezed to death, to the point where disease, territorial conflict, and/or a lack of food, water, and other resources results in completely non-viable biomes, it is remarkable to find a functioning habitat (albeit with restrictions) right in the heart of this human metropolis.

The highlight would have to be participating in the regular Sunday animal count. As I see it, there is no more important question regarding Kenyan conservation than to what degree Kenyans themselves - especially young people - care about the future of wildlife in their country. To spend a day counting animals in the park, part of a group comprised predominantly of those in their teens and twenties, and to hear them describe the value of the park and its wildlife to their lives personally, was a truly uplifting experience. (Indeed, I would welcome anyone reading this who wishes to share their own story to email me at chris.fitch@outlook.com.



On the day itself we found multiple herds of zebra, impala, wildebeest, hartebeest, and giraffes. A couple of white rhinos, and one solitary (and highly paparazzied) male lion. There were no hippo to be found in our area of the park, although we did encounter a couple of large crocs with a pile of offspring. Although I've done multiple safaris in other parts of the continent, never before have I been able to turn my head mid-drive and see skyscrapers on the horizon. To avoid the long and expensive flights associated with travelling to more distant wildlife reserves, to have all of these incredible animals right on your doorstep, is a quite remarkable situation.



• PHOTO CREDIT- CHRIS FITCH

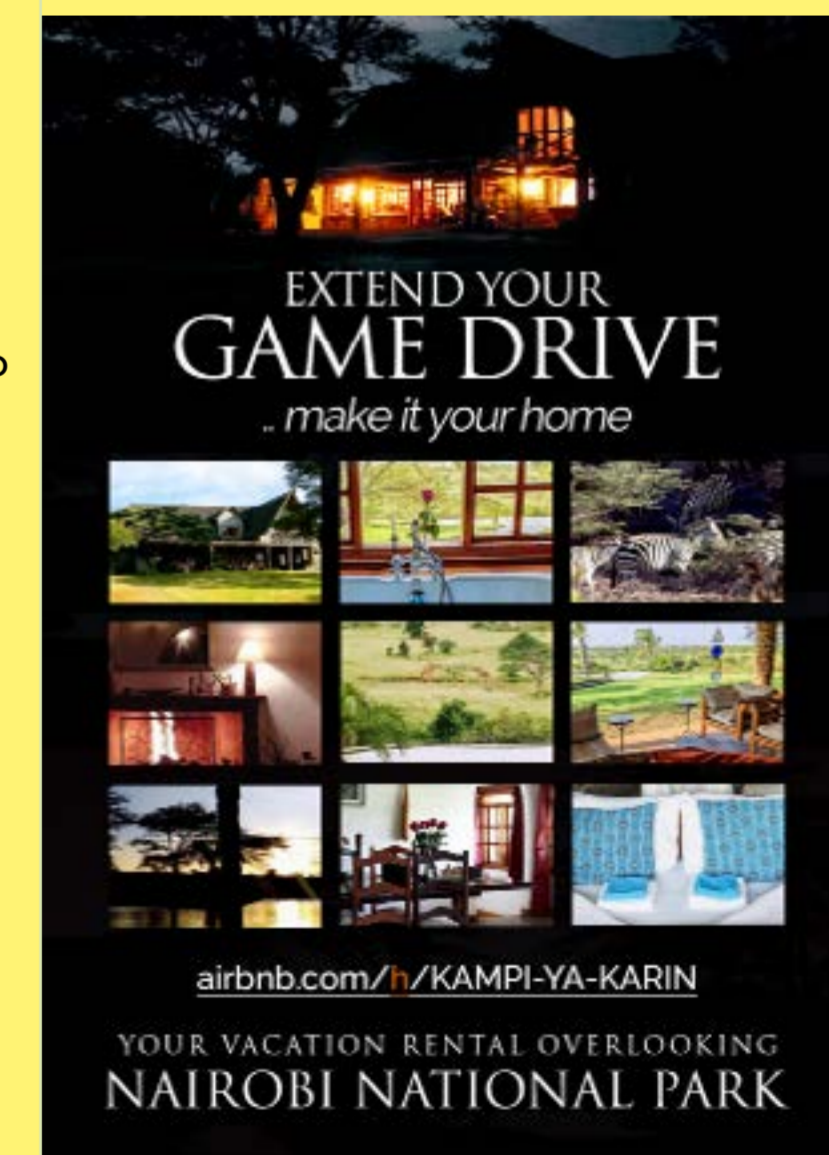


• PHOTO CREDIT- CHRIS FITCH

I know that there are difficulties. I know that the expanding city is putting pressure on that narrow corridor connecting Nairobi National Park with surrounding lands, and other wildlife reserves. And that solutions need to be found that empower residents to fulfil their own potential, to live out their own desires, without creating a situation where it necessary to battle the rights of people against the rights of wildlife. Many cities around the world have similar challenges, as they work out to what extent they can accommodate non-human life in the urban landscape. But few need to manage this problem on such a scale as Nairobi does. This is a moment in which Nairobi can lead the world.

Certainly, my hope is that through my book, and other forms of global media, the rest of the nature-starved urban world will be paying attention to the steps Nairobi takes over the coming years. My hope is that the passion I saw for the park from so many people will see the protection and onward vitality of the park continue for many generations to come. Many thanks to Felix and the whole FoNNAP community for welcoming and helping me during my short stay in the city. Wishing you all the very best of luck with your ongoing projects and campaigns.

Chris Fitch (@chrisfitchchris) is writing a book about nature in cities, to be published in 2023/24 by William Collins of London. See more of his work at chrisfitch.org.



**FoNNaP & T3 CLEAN UP ACTIVITY
PHOTOS CREDIT- MUTWIRI FELIX**



Environmental pollution is rapidly increasing in Kenya, the consumption of plastic items especially bottles has increased over the years leading to excessive dumping. The millions of plastic bottles used end up in the wrong hands simply because Kenya has no widespread infrastructure to deal with solid waste. Plastic bottles now constitute the biggest challenge to solid waste management in the country.

Nairobi National Park being a park within an overpopulated city, waste has become a problem to manage and is one of the main problems since they are channeled in rivers that enter the park or garbage thrown inside the park which affect the water quality and bring about diseases.

On Saturday Morning 19th March 2022, FoNNaP was part of the team that went for the Nairobi National Park Clean-up along the southern by-pass specifically at the wetlands near the NNP@ 75 tree planting initiative and The Mbagathi River in partnership with a number of different environmental conservation movements: KWS, T3LTD, Fiture, NMS, African Nazarene & Multimedia universities. The event was in alignment with the Global Recycling Day celebrated on 18th of March.

We should encourage cleanup activities to cushion NNP against the situation in Nakuru National Park where there is a high mortality of buffaloes. The main cause of death is not yet known but theories suggest that it as a result of extensive pollution of the water bodies affecting the quality of water consumed by wildlife.



- The Mbagathi River Team convened at Kingfisher picnic site after the clean up

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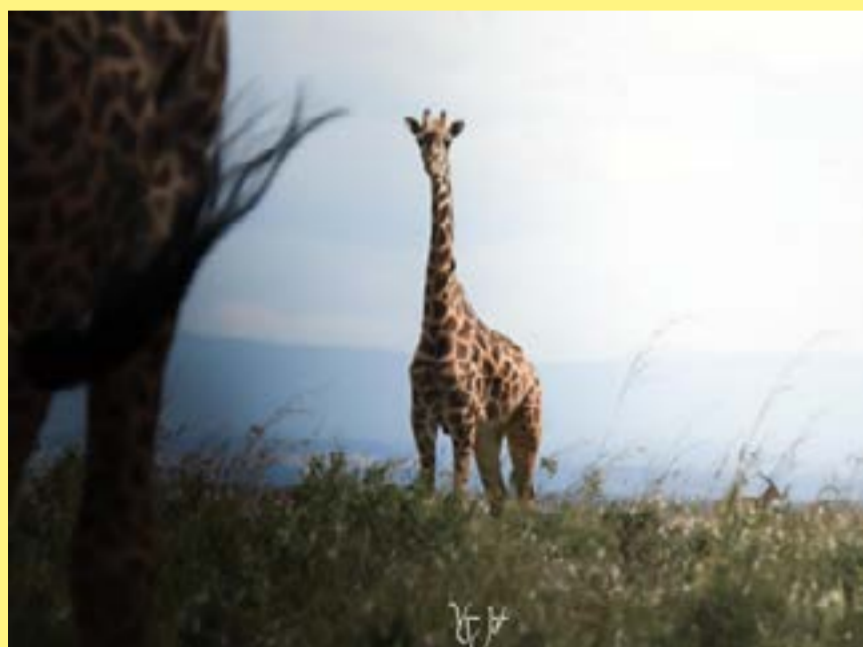
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**AMAZING PASSION FOR WILDLIFE BY VYOM JOSHI- FoNNaP KIDS WRITEUP
PHOTOS CREDIT- VYOM JOSHI**

I am certain that I was born loving wildlife. My earliest recollection of interaction with wildlife was about 5 or 6 when I visited the Tsavo West National Park with family. I spent the entire game drives mimicking the tour guide, spotting game and detailing the characteristics of the different animals. Since then, I've seized every opportunity to surround myself with all things wildlife.



Why am I passionate about wildlife? When animals were created, God must have used all his resources, for there is a beauty in wildlife that is unmatched. Observing wildlife in their natural habitat allows me a front seat to observe how different they are from their appearance to their mannerisms, and how their adaptations have enabled them to coexist in a complex ecosystem. I constantly marvel at how they appreciate their place in the food chain



Taking a game drive is an unrivalled experience. The change from the concrete jungle of the bustling city of Nairobi, to the wild, natural jungle that is Nairobi National Park, is magical: from the graceful giraffe; the male impalas with their lyre-shaped horns; the rare leopard with its beautiful rosettes; the chirping birds at dawn, to the mighty lion having a hearty roar.

They are enthralling to say the least.



My numerous visits to several national parks and game reserves across the country, have increased my knowledge tenfold and have afforded me an opportunity to practice my other passion- photography. Some of the amazing and indescribable sounds and sightings created in me a desire to capture these fleeting moments to be savoured for eternity; and thus began my journey of wildlife photography. Nairobi National Park has a special place in my heart. This gem of a park is just 30 minutes away from home, yet has so much to offer. Out of all the parks I have visited, Nairobi National Park has helped me to sharpen my photography skills by providing me with different game on each drive to photograph.



Wildlife photography is exciting. I get to immortalize animals at their most natural, and in their habitat. A good shot may take seconds or hours. Nothing however, beats those shots that fall on your laps. Shots where the subject, the background and light seem scripted, because of their perfection! Wildlife photography allows me to play a part in the conservation field. This photography helps to create awareness when shared on various social platforms, on the importance of wildlife and the need for their conservation



Not only is wildlife photography and watching game thrilling, but it also a great break that takes my mind off school work. On my photography journey, I have made numerous friends, budding like me, and professional who have passed on useful tips. I love wildlife and wildlife photography, and I am looking forward to increasing my knowledge on wildlife and sharpening my photography skills.



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The Bimonthly FoNNaP organized NNP game count is normally an experience filled with learning and fun. Treat this as a normal game drive while focusing on one particular block counting the animals within.

It is normally a scientific event that requires extreme concentration to avoid undercounts or repeated identification of the same animal.

You will be surprised by the greater biodiversity harbored by NNP and appreciate the efforts by individuals and organizations investing their time and resources for its protection.

During this event we are granted free park entry to give everyone an opportunity to participate.

From us we supports the animal census to promote learning and appreciation of life beyond the limits of the city. The Park is a tranquil space of fresh breath and beautiful sceneries to create long lasting memories. We appreciate the art of photography during the game counts which gives us the opportunity to take photos of wildlife in their own natural ecosystems.

The activity kicks off at 6.00 am, participants pick their datasheets and carefully drive to the park with huge expectations, you will be surprised how amazing game viewing can be in these early hours.

FoNNaP youth members finds it thrilling, it is a motivation realizing that it is the first time visit to NNP for most of these young minds. We are proud of the new recruits in the conservation of NNP.

For the next one year youths transport during the game counts will be facilitated by AFEW. We want to extend our gratitude to them for their continued support



• Silver Backed Jackal PHOTO CREDIT- CHRIS FITCH

The difference between black and white rhino. Blacks are smaller (not small) have smaller heads, prehensile upper lip and are primarily browsers. White, bigger, heavier, larger heads, wide flat mouth for grazing (white is a corruption of Dutch word, 'weit', meaning wide in reference to its mouth, in Afrikaans).



• White Rhino by Lucas Mboya

A key identifier, black rhino can raise their heads above their shoulders with a single broad hump over their shoulders as opposed to white rhino whose difference neck vertebrae keep is head below shoulder level and can be identified by the twin hump over its shoulders.



• Black Rhino by Lucas Mboya

Temperament. Black rhinos are 'twitchy', unpredictable (often confused with bad tempered). They tend to react immediately on detecting other animals, humans in their comfort zone. They then focus on any potential threat and either retreat or close in to investigate or charge. Black rhinos tend to be loners. White rhinos are more docile, easier to approach and more habituated to other animals, people, vehicles. White rhinos are gregarious. Their names have nothing to do with skin colour.

Both species are endangered, the black, critically so.

The Tourism Development and Management Programme aims "to develop a distinctive and diverse nature-based tourism that offers visitors memorable experiences".

To achieve this aim, the programme sets out an ambitious strategy for enhancing visitor experience and thereby increasing visitation, as well as tourism revenues. The strategy focuses on providing new and innovative opportunities for private sector investment in the park, as well as activities that enhance visitor experience and satisfaction. The programme's objectives focus on developing tourism investment opportunities; improving tourism product to enhance visitor experience; marketing NNP locally and internationally; and improving tourism management.

The priority management actions that will be implemented under this programme include:

1. Upgrade the existing temporary camp into a permanent low impact tented camp;
2. Renovate the KWS Club House to a proper restaurant;
3. Develop a Visitor Service Centre;
4. Develop the Ivory burning memorial interpretive site-Elephant graveyard;
5. Improve Simba View Point (The Former Impala Observation Point);
6. Upgrade and rehabilitate facilities at Mokoyiet picnic site and viewing point; Hippo Pools Picnic Site, nature trail and Cultural Centre; Kingfisher picnic site; and park entry gates;
7. Modernise marketing methods;
8. Nominate NNP to join the International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories (INSTO).

Community Partnership and Conservation Education Programme

The Community Partnership and Conservation Education Programme aims "to enhance the support and participation of NNP adjacent communities in wildlife conservation". Key in achieving this aim is ensuring that NNP management and adjacent communities are able to effectively communicate and collaborate with each other. This will be achieved through implementation of the management objectives that focus on: strengthening conservation education and awareness programme; promoting conservation-compatible community land uses and practises; reducing human-wildlife conflict; and improving opportunities for communities to benefit from the NNP.

The key priority actions that will be implemented to achieve the programme's aims are:

1. Establish sponsored protected area tours for the local community;
2. Support establishment of community wildlife conservancies;
3. Support development of a Conservancy Livestock grazing plan;
4. Train community scouts in relevant skills;
5. Support wildlife related community enterprise projects;
6. Support formation of Water Resource Users Associations for management of the section of Mbagathi River in NNP;
7. Work with the County Governments of Kajiado and Machakos in maintaining wildlife dispersal areas;
8. Construct and maintain a wildlife fence to protect people and their property;
9. Create awareness on the wildlife compensation process among the local community.

Friends of Nairobi National Park

New Updated Maps of Nairobi National Park

Map of Nairobi National Park

Friends of Nairobi National Park (FONNAP)
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First Edition 2021

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Immediately after the AGM some of us proceeded to Hillcrest International Schools where FoNNaP was invited for cultural day celebrations. With Hillcrest being a FoNNaP Corporate member, we celebrate their great passion in supporting conservation initiatives in Nairobi National Park. Last year the students had a wonderful game drive in NNP which was followed by a successful clean up activity where all the plastic materials were issued to T3 Ltd for recycling. The Deputy Headteacher Madam Razwana invited FoNNaP to attend this big day which was in line with their efforts to fundraise for a Lion Collar in NNP. Our attendance and presence were highly favored by the turnout by the youth members of FoNNaP. Their participation was impactful especially on merchandise sales.



We hope to maintain the zeal by our entire membership in ensuring that we all come out to do the little thing possible to safeguard NNP for posterity.

On March 26th FoNNaP Members convened at KWS Education Hall for the AGM. This is after the cancellation of the previous AGM that should have happened on 26th February due to lack of the quorum to meet the constitutional threshold to hold such a sitting.

On 26th March members turnout was overwhelming and we really appreciate everyone for giving their time to participate. To our Youths, Corporates representatives and our entire loyal membership- Thank you so much. The AGM was starting at exactly 10 am.

It was a moment to reflect on the achievements of the previous board. The Chairperson's report was shared after which several members expressed their frustration for the Board did not consider to engage them in running the organization.

Members insisted that the Board must work from a strategic point and that they are willing to support the making of the strategy as long as the board invites them.

Voting for the new board

The elections to appoint a new board went on as per the FoNNaP constitution and the following were elected to serve for the year 2022/2023.

Chairperson- Davinder Sikand
Vice Chairperson- Jim Kinyany
Treasurer- Irina Wandera

BOARD MEMBERS

Patita Nkamunu
Francis Mwariga
Muriuki Githongo

Two positions remained vacant and the new board will have the positions filled soonest possible.

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Recently we stopping at the Ivory burn site with a visitor, I noticed some lesser striped swallows on top of one of the piles of burnt ivory. As I stood and watched them for a few minutes it was amazing to observe that the swallows were actually eating the ivory. Wow, then thought came to me that, out of the tragic and terrible deaths of thousands of elephants these swallows represent a glimmer of new life from the burnt ivory that was seemingly dead. My understanding is that they eat the small pieces of burnt ivory for the calcium and mineral content to strengthen the shells of their eggs. Personally, I am not sure how many birds have started eating the pieces of burnt ivory, it would obviously take many years for such tiny birds to eat the huge piles of burnt ivory in the Nairobi National Park. For those who might be wondering, Kenya has made an ongoing decision to rather destroy all elephant ivory in the custody of the Kenya Wildlife Service at a place now known as the Ivory burn site near the main entrance of the Nairobi national park. It is now 30 years since Dr Richard Leakey pioneered the initial ivory burn in 1989, however the most recent ivory burn action was the largest with 105 tons reduced to ashes. By destroying large amounts of ivory Kenya sends a clear message to the world that there should not be a demand market for ivory products such as carvings and jewelry. Instead, ivory must only be worn and shown in a wonderfully magnificently way by elephants..

When visiting David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust in the Nairobi National Park, it is touching to see the orphan elephants, as the staff tell the story of each elephant, many are tragically sad, as their mothers were killed due to poaching. The battle to save the Elephants continues, as many are aware in recent days a huge mega pile of Ivory representing about 8000 elephants was burned to send a message to the World that Ivory must not be valued after death, but instead be priceless on living elephants. Kenya has a 'HANDS OFF OUR ELEPHANTS' "action movement to stop the bloody ivory trade. The idea for this bold initiative has come from dedicated people like Dr Paula Kahumbu of Wildlife Direct, however in order to gain success in this ongoing battle, many, many good people need to get "hands on" involved, for it has been said before "for evil to succeed then good people just need to do nothing!"

I visited the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust in the Nairobi National Park, and was touched to see the orphan elephants as they ran into the feeding area, the staff then proceed to tell the story of each elephant, many are tragically sad, as their mothers were killed due to poaching. The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust serves a very worthwhile purpose in hand rearing the orphaned elephants and then ensuring they are translocated to Tsavo East where they are allowed to mature further before being released into the wild.



• Photo credit- Gareth Jones



• Photo credit- Gareth Jones

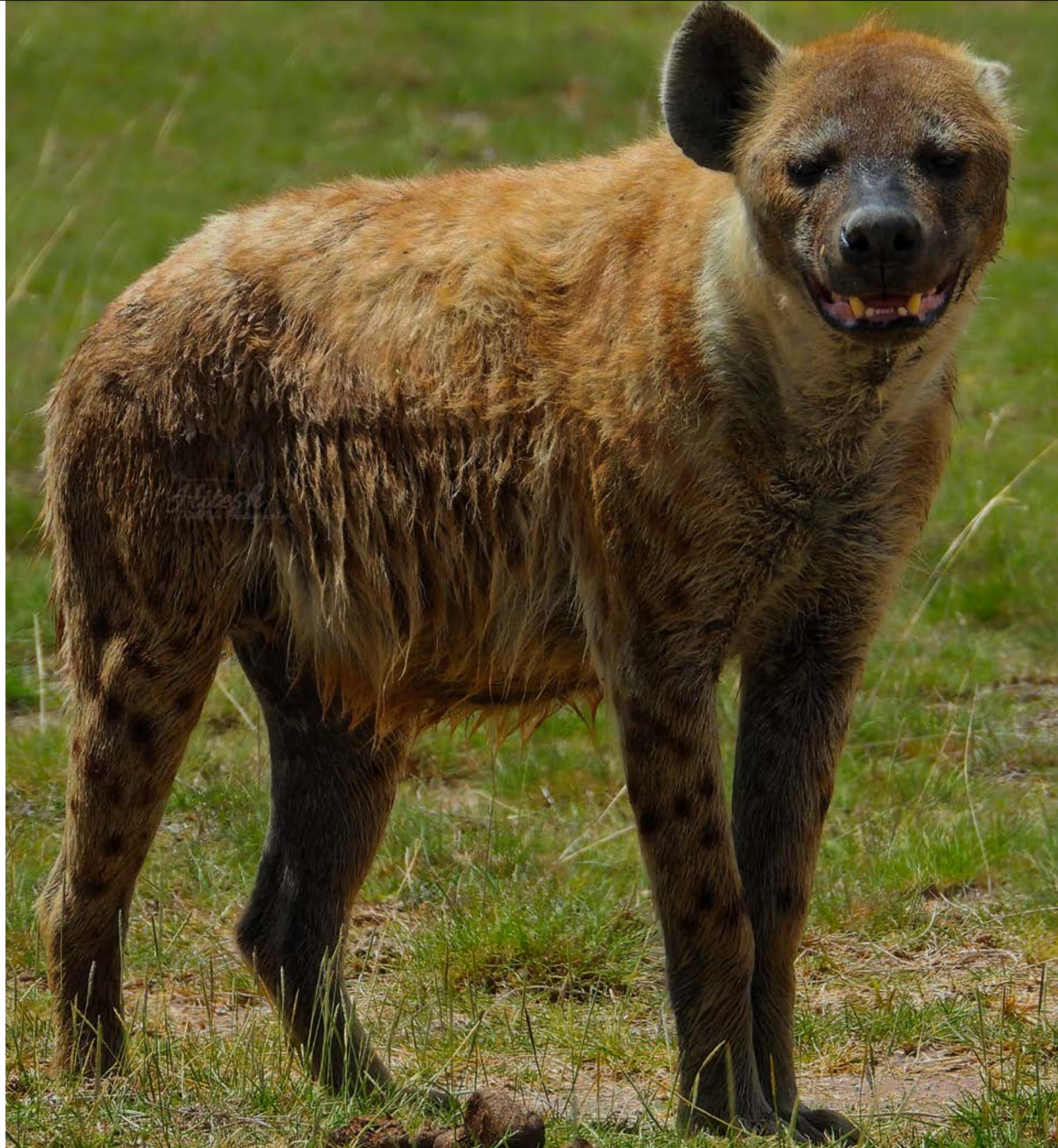
Should anyone want to visit the elephant orphanage, feeding time for the baby elephants is daily at 10am, however it best to arrive early to get a good view, fees are nominal in the form of a donation. Some people also "adopt" a baby elephant by funding them individually. The Elephant orphanage is easy to find, just drive towards Ongata Rongai from Galleria Mall, go past Banda school and turn left about 1km after that at the KWS workshop entrance, then follow the signs.



• Photo credit- Gareth Jones

Just over 100 years ago elephants did roam over the Nairobi area. It is estimated that the land now known as Kenya had more than 250000 elephants in the not to distant past, by 1973 the numbers reduced to 170000 then by 1989 they reduced to only 16000...today there are over 30000, and with poaching on the rise again, the battle continues. It is significant that the Ivory burning in the Nairobi National Park now symbolizes the tragic past remembering of the deaths of thousands of elephants, and also represents hope for a new life for the many baby orphan elephants, and surprisingly also aiding life for the lesser striped swallows. It is interesting and also sad that the Nairobi National Park now only includes elephants at the beginning and the end of their life cycle. Sadly, mostly due to poaching and also massive human construction developments, we now only have babies & ivory remaining in Nairobi.

The battle to save the Elephants continues, as many people are involved in the 'HANDS OFF OUR ELEPHANTS' "campaign to stop the bloody ivory trade. When visiting the ivory burn site and the elephant orphanage it is a serious time to reflect and pray for the future of Kenya's elephants.



EFFORTS BY KENYA FOREST WORKING GROUP



The Kenya Forest Working Group (KFWG) held a three-day workshop between 22nd and 24th March 2022. Thirty participants attended the workshop among them 10 Community Forest Associations (CFAs) whose constituent houses key members of parliament in the amendment bill. The workshop aimed at strengthening KFWG legislative memorandum and producing a robust and responsive Advocacy strategy as well as creating a better understanding among Stakeholders of the legal implications of the bill. As a Key Stakeholder and partner the FoNNaP membership was represented during the workshop by Felix- Our Administrative assistant. Our input is majorly on advocacy and high participation by our membership in our personal and institutional capacity.

- So far huge steps have been made in the following areas:
1. Petitions and press releases
 2. Media engagement
 3. Meeting with Parliamentarians and senate committees
 4. Involvement of the private sector, the religious leaders and other relevant bodies
 5. Direct notice was written to the president
 6. Call for public participation



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NNP MARCH SIGHTINGS



Photo credit- Chris Fitch



Photo credit- Dyan Rhodes



Photo credit- Ravi Ubhi

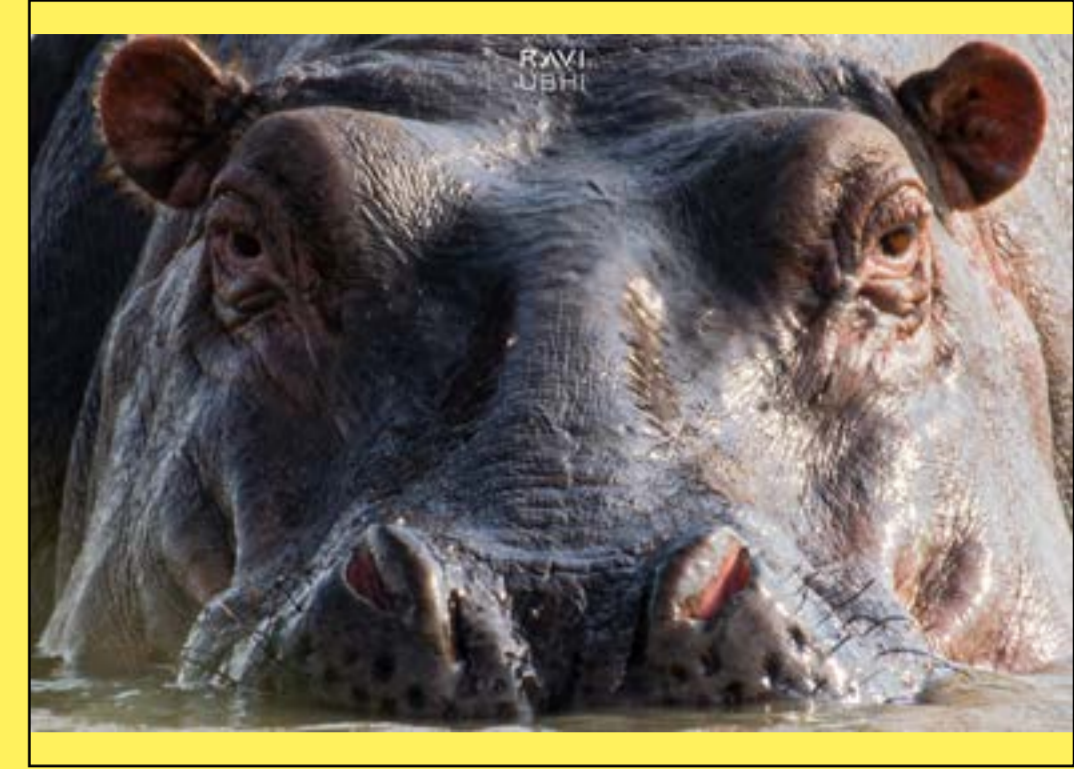


Photo credit- Ravi Ubhi



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Photo credit- Harsh Gutka



Photo credit- Harsh Gutka

BIRD SIGHTINGS



Photo credit- Ravi Ubhi



Photo credit- Dyan Hall



Photo credit- Dyan Hall



Photo credit- Ravi Ubhi



Photo credit- Dyan Hall

OTHER NNP SIGHTINGS



Photo credit- Elaine Carneiro

OUR CORPORATE MEMBERS





NAIROBI NATIONAL PARK NEWS

FONNAP IS A NON- PROFIT MEMBERSHIP SOCIETY FOUNDED IN 1995 DEDICATED TO HELPING KENYA WILDLIFE SERVICE (KWS) TO NURTURE AND PROTECT BIODIVERSITY WITHIN NAIROBI NATIONAL PARK, AND THE BROADER ECOSYSTEM TO WHICH THE PARK BELONGS.

Join today and be a friend of the park.

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