Exceptional gateway: Mt. Suswa Conservancy
Understanding ecotourism
The ecotourism necessity
Zero waste habits profits youths
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Welcome to the first edition of Naturals magazine.

It’s a great pleasure to introduce this new publication meant to enrich and support the tourism industry in Kenya. The initiation of the magazine has been motivated by a drastic rise in requests for authentic information about ecotourism, and an increasing demand for ecotourism resources by many tourism stakeholders. The upsurge in environmental awareness by travellers worldwide has consequently elicited a high interest in ecotourism by tour operators, hoteliers and local communities in Kenya.

Ecotourism can be simply defined as ‘the involvement of tourism in environmental conservation practises linked to human development needsthat promote equitable sharing of benefits accrued from tourism with local communities while supporting their nature conservation values’.

To sustain the high interest in ecotourism, there is need for adopting creative and adaptive management approaches that address key players, stakeholders and relevant actors in order to generate the desired positive effects onto the tourism sector in Kenya. One key approach is to provide a regular platform for sharing information and exchanging experiences about ecotourism. There are few local publications providing news and information closely related to ecotourism practises, responsible and sustainable tourism; the three concepts are scattered in marketing promotions by different local tour operators and hospitality providers. There is lack of a consolidated resource for promoting ecotourism as an important tool for improving tourism standards in Kenya.

Therefore, Naturals magazine targets a wide readership comprised of students, tour operators, policy makers, social development agents, conservation interests, entrepreneurs and investors. It is a hub for learning, sharing information and presenting innovative ideas on promoting nature conservation and community participation in tourism. Players in the tourism industry need technical knowledge from relevant practical experience to guide investment planning and management decision-making. Training institutes offering ecotourism courses need a magazine that provides training resources as well as a career guide for aspiring practitioners. An enlightened workforce armed with the necessary skills, knowledge and education about the importance of ecotourism is essential for ensuring sustainable tourism through adoption of responsible tourism practices.

Apart from sharing information, Naturals provides opportunities for exchanging experiences gained from the application of ecotourism practices in Kenya and around the world. It also provides a networking platform for tourism actors on matters concerning ecotourism. The magazine markets ecotourism-based travel products, including market-ready community tourism enterprises located within tourist attractions in urban and rural areas. Most importantly, the publication advocates for responsible and sustainable tourism to protect the environment, conserve natural resources and equitable sharing of benefits with local communities.

I welcome you to contribute articles to the magazine based on your role and interest in tourism. Hopefully, the publication will meet your expectations and help you understand and practise ecotourism suitably.
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Letters to the editor

Dear Editor,

I am a great fan of your work that links tourism, conservation and communities. How can I become a member of Ecotourism Kenya and what are your membership and advertising rates?

Eco-investor

Dear Eco-investor,

Thank you for your keen interest in our work to become a member of Ecotourism Kenya. Besides the satisfaction of knowing that you are supporting environmental conservation activities, members also enjoy discounted rates on our publications, activities and merchandise. Also, members enjoy free consultation with the EK Secretariat. To learn more on our membership categories and to download the application forms on our website, www.ecotourismkenya.org, See our membership and advertising rates on Page 22 of this magazine.

Editor

Dear Editor,

We often receive requests from French citizens on ecological-related and cultural tourism. We would therefore like to establish contact with a member of your team who will provide us with information on these sectors from time to time. In addition, kindly send us information on possibilities for tourists to visit and stay with communities, particularly the Maasai.

Mwiyathi Wanjira for The French Ambassador to Kenya
www.kenyaembassyparis.org

Dear Mwiyathi,

We are glad to learn that French citizens are interested in visiting attractions and community-based ecotourism enterprises. We have developed an online Members’ Database that can be viewed on our website at http://www.ecotourismkenya.org/members.php. Here you’ll find our members’ profiles and contact details that are listed in three categories: Eco-rated facilities, Corporate and Community Based Organizations. For any more inquires do not hesitate to contact our Community Officer, Mr. Gonzaga Mungai.

Editor
Many people wonder about the origins of ecotourism. Much has been written about it but there is little consensus about what it entails. This has led to the rise of many controversies; not just about the definition of the term, but also its underlying principles.

Ecotourism arose in the 1970s from a conservationist perspective based on concerns by local indigenous people in South America to save rainforests from timber logging, ranching and encroachment by urbanization. These people argued that the government-sanctioned policies and programs was threatening their social and economic survival all of which depended on the forests.

Tourism was a growing global phenomenon at the time, and activists campaigned to popularise it as a preferable way of utilizing the rainforests without destroying them, while simultaneously providing benefits to the locals whose entire livelihoods depended on the forests.

The bold and unprecedented actions of the South Americans attracted the interests of many international conservation organizations. Their momentum gained support all over the world. In their quest for new and evocative jargon to describe these actions, the mass media and press popularised the terminology ‘eco-friendly tourism’.

The expanded notion of ecotourism has drawn enormous interest by private, governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. However, the development of ecotourism has had its own setbacks.

From an economic perspective, the idea that tourists could provide sufficient income through nature watching as an alternative to the destructive logging, ranching and settlements was perceived as being too simplistic. Ecotourism implied caring and saving in contrast to the destruction inherent in the mainstream perception of tourism.

This simplistic view consequently painted a false picture of the evils of high-volume mainstream tourism, whose purposes were mainly economic, against the merits of responsible, low-volume nature-based ecotourism. Ecotourism was meant to utilize the resources readily available in areas visited by tourists, rather than depend on imports. The generated revenue was to be directed towards supporting the conservation of nature, rather than ending up in the pockets of developers.

The same conscientious concern for nature was extended further to local peoples due to the intricate connection between nature and local cultures. Again, implicit in the term was the assumption that local communities living with nature should benefit from tourism and will save nature in the process.

It is not surprising that ecotourism has incorporated a fair portion of nature and wildlife tourism within the African context. The development of ecotourism became highly attractive and relevant in many African countries, where wildlife tourism and wildlife conservation was already deeply rooted from the late 1960s as a key source of national revenue. By the 1970s efforts were already underway to address the negative side of wildlife tourism, while exhausting avenues by which local communities can benefit from other tourism activities that do not necessarily involve wildlife.
14 tourist hotels, lodges, luxury camps and operators have achieved the prestigious Ecotourism label valid for the next 24 months. The label (awarded as gold, silver and bronze) is an ecological and cultural rating criteria for tourism accommodation facilities with commendable initiatives for protecting the natural environment, involving local people in tourism and sharing tourism benefits with local communities. The voluntary eco-rating scheme was launched in 2002 to recognize ecotourism best practices for environmental conservation, sustainable use of resources, and socio-economic investment.

The new awards for Ecotourism Best Practises for assessments completed between April and September 2011 are as follows:

**Gold**
- Elephant Pepper Camp
- Porini Selenkay Camp

**Silver**
- Severin Safari Camp,
- Severin Sea Lodge, Mara Explorer, Mara Intrepids,
- Amboseli Serena Safari Lodge and Governors Camp

**Bronze**
- Satao Camp, Satao Elerai Camp, Ol Tukai Lodge,
- Kilima Camp, Mara Serena Safari Lodge,
- Little Governors Camp and Tawi Lodge

Who is being audited now?
Grab the next issue of naturals to find out the results for the following facilities currently under assessment:

- Baobab Beach Resort, Turtle Bay Beach Resort, Voyager Beach Resort, Kilaguni Serena Safari Lodge, Voyager Ziwani and Campi ya Kanzi

How long do ratings last?
Bronze and Silver Eco-rating are valid for 24 months and Gold Eco-rating for 12 months from date of award. A new application for evaluation must be lodged at least three months before the Certificate expires. Renewal is at the discretion of the Eco-rating Committee in consultation with the secretariat or audit team.

How do I apply?
Request for an information package from Ecotourism Kenya by sending an e-mail to info@ecotourismkenya.org

A full list and detailed description of all the Eco-Rated facilities can be found on our website www.ecotourismkenya.org

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KAHC is the principal umbrella organization bringing together hotels, lodges, pubs, restaurants, entertainment establishments, membership clubs, conference centers and prominent airline caterers whose common theme is to render services in the hospitality industry.

Our Vision is to make Kenyan Hospitality “globally competitive and viable” for the stakeholders, who include guests, shareholders, employees, local communities, suppliers and the Government.

The Association is the principal voice for hotels and restaurants to the government and other agencies on matters of regulations, licensing, and policy. It also acts as the principal information exchange network for members and the Industry. We promote and protect harmonious industrial relations. Coordination of training In collaboration with Kenya Utalii College on Training and Development programmes is also an important role of the organization.

Heidelberg House - 2nd Level, Mombasa Road,
P.O. Box 9977-00100 Nairobi. Tel No. 0206004419, 020602538.
Social Security House, Nikanam Road, 8th Level,
P.O. Box 83378, Mombasa. Tel No.041-2312504, 041-2222808.
The exceptional getaway: 
Mt Suswa Conservancy

Located approximately 55 kilometres from Nairobi is Mount Suswa Conservancy. It is a unique destination that offers striking scenic views and an excellent getaway for an exceptional inimitable adventure.

The conservancy boasts a double crater which is part of Mount Suswa and is endowed with picturesque landscape, plains, craters and caves. The conservancy has about 76 large lava caves interconnected underground, most of them still unexplored. The collection of caves is considered as the world’s most complex braided system of lava tubes, most of which are accessible.

The Conservancy is a habitat to sizeable populations of wild herbivores e.g. Thomson’s gazelle, Common Zebra, Masai Giraffe and, occasionally elephants and large carnivores. Over 4 species of bats inhabit the lava caves. Rock Hyrax is common. Different kinds of hyena roam the area at night. The conservancy provides over 200 species of birds, including the seasonal migrants from Europe and Asia. Visitors enjoy paying a courtesy call to the ‘Baboon parliament’ where over 300 baboons converge daily for sleep.

The mountain Mount Suswa hosts a beautiful double crater which offers a refreshing scenic view from above and below, which is perfect for mountain-climbing and hiking. The pristine environs are serene, relaxing with soothing fresh air an ideal gate-away for visitors seeking a romantic view with their loved ones. Trekking is also popular; under the stewardship of the local guides one gets a firsthand experience of the terrain and a chance to view wildlife at close range.

Evening nature walks at Mount Suswa Conservancy are memorable. They offer a great opportunity to enjoy the cool breeze and the beautiful cloud cover, amidst the chirping crickets and mooing cows as they retire to their sheds. The sunset view is to die for, and visitors can view the Giant Red-Orange majestic sunset that slowly disappears into the horizon.

Name of Destination: Mt Suswa Conservancy
Location: Kajiado & Narok Counties in Rift Valley Province
Attractions: Lava Caves, Double Crater, Wildlife, Cultural Villages, Steam Jets, Rock Art, Masai Culture

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION
Catering: Visitors bring their own food and fuel. You can order for meat roasted the Maasai way upon request.

Accommodation: Camping area with sanitary facilities and security provided. Campers carry their own camping gear.

Packages available: Tailor made on request according to individual needs.

Utilities: Water comes from the Steam Jets. Electricity is powered by solar, it’s just enough for charging small utilities.

What to carry: You need tough shoes that can withstand the rocky topography, a pair binoculars to view the birds and bats, a torch and extra batteries for the cave excursions.

Altitude: 2356 m 7,730 feet
Latitude: 1.175°S 1°10’30’’S

Access: Take the old road from Nairobi to Naivasha (the more westerly). After 58 km, just before reaching Longonot, turn left at Mai Mahiu onto a good tarmac road leading to Narok. After 10 km a satellite station is passed on the left; in another 6.5 km along this road a dirt road leads South towards Suswa. Now go 6 km across plains to a Maasai manyatta. Just beyond this a track leads 55kms West up the slopes of Suswa, which is a very rough and fairly steep ride.

Contact Persons:
Gonzaga Mungai 0720 732 450, communities@ecotourismkenya.org
Pastor Kadongo 0725 233592
David Tuukuo 0722 629 350
Johnson Ole Sipitiek 0722 856 703, johnson.sipitiek@acc.or.ke

cont. on Pg.9
Without being presumptuous, this article attempts to define and briefly expound on the terminology from a Kenyan perspective in the context of a tourism civil society organization in the country, Ecotourism Kenya (EK).

At EK, ecotourism is not perceived as a type or kind of tourism but a way of tourism. It is therefore defined as ‘the involvement of tourists in environmental conservation practices which address local human development needs while promoting equitable sharing of benefits accrued from tourism with the local communities’.

This definition is based on several principles. First, ecotourism recognizes and supports local nature conservation values upheld by the traditions, customs and cultures of the local people. Second, ecotourism facilitates the quality of a traveller’s experience locally through providing fulfilling, attractive and exceptional goods and services in a fair trade and business relationship situation. This means that the local people should derive sufficient economic benefits from tourism activities in their locality. Third, ecotourism advocates for protection of the natural environment and enhancement of local conservation values. Fourth, ecotourism requires that local people are directly involved and participate pro-actively in tourism within their region. Fifth, ecotourism promotes local human development as necessary. And sixth, ecotourism should not retrogress, or not contribute to the retrogression of, environmental conservation and human development standards.

‘Ecotourism’ is still one of the most unclear words in the travel industry worldwide. Its definition varies widely, depending on the founding principles and the modus operandi of the respective organizations. Over time, this variance has led to confusion and frustrations, in understanding and applying ecotourism principles.

THE KENYAN PERSPECTIVE
These principles imply that ecotourism practices can be applied to all types of tourism and tourism products. Hence, ecotourism is essential in the development of high-quality and unique tourism products that attract and satisfy all types of travelers. Again, ecotourism could improve the marketability of any destination, provided that it is linked with local communities. Given the diversity of local cultures, ecotourism thus facilitates the diversification of tourism products available at any destination thus offering any traveler a wide choice of options in a destination. This would lead to improvement of a traveler’s experience, increased enjoyment and appreciation. Consequently, if harnessed successfully, ecotourism also has the potential to stimulate tourism growth at local levels thus generating more revenues and related socio-economic benefits for local people.

Therefore, ecotourism is relevant to and applicable by all stakeholders in the travel industry – private, public, civil, governmental, nongovernmental, communal and institutional. Ecotourism is a major promoter; of responsible tourism, whereby stakeholders ensure that tourism activities promote environmental protection and respect for local people and human rights. In this way, ecotourism contributes significantly to sustainable tourism by advocating for responsible policies, laws and practices that preserve essential resources and systems, which support and facilitate tourism in a region. Ecotourism emphasises on low impact tourism as well as provides attractive land use options that provide direct income and thus uplift the livelihoods of people while being respectful to local customs and nature conservation values.

Ecotourism can be a major force in natural resource conservation as well as human development. However, in addition to the misunderstandings and misinterpretations, ecotourism faces many challenges including lack of sufficient knowledge about the subject and inadequate resources to provide stakeholders with guidelines for authentic ecotourism. Hence this has resulted in the mislabeling of ecotourism within the tourism industry, as ‘greenwashing’.

The exceptional getaway: Mt Suswa Conservancy

Mt. Suswa Conservancy has two main campsites, one near the outer crater and the other near the fig tree cave. They provide spectacular views of the baboons retiring to the caves and the bats leaving for the night. The spacious campsites, complete with toilet and washroom facilities, are offer a superb vantage point to view the constellation over an evening chat over the camp fire.

The local community is predominantly semi-nomadic hospitable Maasai of the Keekonyokie Clan. Interaction with the Maasai exposes visitors to their rich diverse culture, while enjoying their indigenous cuisine composed of mainly meat and milk. By spending more time with the community, you’ll learn a word or two of the Maa language, and an opportunity to promote the community that sells traditional ornaments and artefacts as souvenirs.
The 4th Annual
National Ecotourism Conference 2011

Ecotourism Kenya is pleased to announce the 4th Annual Ecotourism Conference to be held at Sarova Panafric Hotel, Nairobi from the 23rd to 25th November 2011.

The theme of the conference is: “Integrating Ecotourism Practices for the Modern Traveler.”

The conference is inviting a wide range of participants including: tourism practitioners, hoteliers, policy makers, government institutions, community groups, researchers, students, environmental conservation and management technology firms, and the media to address pertinent ecotourism issues affecting tourism in Kenya, and how to promote best practices and high ecotourism standards in Kenya's tourism sector.

Conference Objectives
The conference main objectives are:
1. To understand the role of ecotourism in promoting responsible and sustainable tourism in Kenya.
2. To learn how to integrate ecotourism principles in tourism management and operations.
3. To address key environmental conservation challenges facing tourism in Kenya.
4. To showcase ecotourism best practices, case studies, technologies and innovations in Kenya.
5. To foster public-private partnerships between the main tourism operators and community tourism enterprises in Kenya and address ways of promoting Kenya as a world leading destination for ecotourism.

Conference Activities
Presentations and Workshops: The conference will hold plenary and workshop sessions for delegates to interact with lead experts and presenters in various fields.

Eco-Warriors Gala Dinner: The Conference will culminate in a colorful Eco-Warriors Awards Gala Dinner on 25th November 2011 held to recognize exceptional Ecotourism achievements in Kenya this year.

Ecotourism Exhibition: Showcasing a wide variety of products from different parts of Kenya, which promote ecotourism at tour operator, community and governmental levels.

For more enquiries on registration, payments and exhibition rates please contact Ms. Phoebe Munyoro on 0726 366 080 or info@ecotourismkenya.org

Call for Papers

EK Conference Organizing Committee is calling for papers for the 4th Annual Ecotourism Conference which will be held at the Sarova Panafric Hotel, Nairobi from the 23rd to 25th November 2011. The papers will cover the following thematic areas:

- Impacts of tourism: social, economic and environmental;
- Linking tourism, conservation and local communities;
- Appropriate technology for ecotourism;
- Policy development and planning for tourism sustainability;
- Ecotourism research, training and capacity building;
- Ecotourism promotion and marketing for sustainability.

The official language of the conference will be English.

Submission of abstract
Abstracts (approximately 200-350 words) indicating background, practical implications and applications, methods and or data sources and indicative findings of the paper is excepted to be submitted for vetting and verification by a technical committee.

Abstracts should be submitted to Ecotourism Kenya on or before 7th October 2011 via info@ecotourismkenya.org and subject line titled CALL FOR PAPERS

Important dates and deadlines
- Submission of abstracts: 21st October 2011
- Notification of acceptance of abstracts: 29th October 2011
- Submission of full papers: 11th November 2011
Ecotourism Kenya at a glance

EK is one of the key tourism industry associations serving over 400 members in Kenya and East Africa. Since its inception as the Ecotourism Society of Kenya in 1996, EK has been promoting ecotourism best practices in the tourism industry by organizing international conferences and training workshops, developing guidelines, codes of conduct, best practices and an Eco-certification scheme for lodges.

Vision: To be a leader in the knowledge and practice of ecotourism.

Mission: To effectively link tourism, communities and conservation for sustainable tourism development in Kenya.

EK Programmes:

Standards & Best Practice: This involves promoting tourism best practices that will conserve Kenya’s natural environment and improve livelihoods of local people. This is promoted through the Eco-rating Scheme, the Members’ Charter, Eco-Warrior Awards, Codes of Conduct, publications, seminars and workshops.

Community Outreach:
The program aims to integrate communities and community-based tourism enterprises into the mainstream tourism industry in Kenya. This involves community mobilization; participatory trainings, seminars and workshops; community advisory services on product development, fund raising, etc., and promotion of community based, owned and/or managed tourism enterprises.

Information and Awareness: This is achieved through publications and meetings, including quarterly newsletters, monthly e-letters, regional workshops and a biennial conference. It is also achieved through the website and the resource centre.

Research & Consultancy: This focuses on ecotourism and sustainable tourism, best practices, policy development and tourism planning and management. We also undertake social evaluation of programmes, and review Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and Environmental Audits (EAs).

Leadership and Mentorship Program: Provides its EK student members with an opportunity to gain work experience, nurture their skills, and get enlightened about the fundamentals and practices of ecotourism. The program blends the academic and professional, theoretical and practical aspects, while addressing the interests of all participants.

Email: info@ecotourismkenya.org
Website: www.ecotourismkenya.org

Membership:

Membership is open to all individuals, groups and organizations that promote sustainable tourism in Kenya. This include students, professionals, academic institutions, tourism and conservation organizations, government departments, tour operators, travel agents, hoteliers, etc.

We have five membership categories:

- Corporate – Ksh.10,000 a year (January to December)
- Community Based Organizations (CBOs) – Ksh.1,000 a year
- Individual Full – Ksh.2,500 a year
- Individual Students (excluding Masters and PhD.) – Ksh.1,000 a year
- Sponsors – From Kshs. 20,000 a year

Membership Benefits:

- Free Monthly E-letters, Quarterly Magazine,
- Membership Card or Certificate
- Free Access to EK Resource Centre
- Promotion through EK’s Publications (Green Directory, Ecotourism Kenya Guide & Magazine)
- Free listing and login access to EK’s Website for Corporate Organizations
- Use of EK Emblem: Individual, CBO & Corporate
- Members Discounted Rate admission to EK Monthly Events
- Free Consultancy with EK Secretariat
- Annual EK Visits and Talks upon request for Corporates
- Networking Opportunities
- Free Publishing on EK Magazines
- Beneficiaries of the Leadership and Mentorship Program
- Full voting rights at general meetings
Selenkay Conservancy

The Amboseli Ecosystem, located in Loitoktok district, is characterized by vast savannah grassland. It is renowned as the best place in Africa to get close to free-ranging African elephants, the picturesque view of Mount Kilimanjaro, and interaction with the Ol-Maa people.

In 1991, the Amboseli ecosystem received special recognition by UNESCO and the Government of Kenya as a designated Man and Biosphere Reserve, due to its contribution to the development of the local people and improvement of local infrastructure.

Selenkay Conservancy is one of the conservancies located within the Greater Amboseli Ecosystem. It is located approximately 16kms north of the Amboseli National Park, it’s an important wildlife dispersal area for wildlife migrating out of the park.

In May 1997, the Selenkay Group Ranch entered into a partnership agreement with Porini Ecotourism Limited, to set aside 7,000 ha of the 75,000-ha ranch into a Conservation Area for the protection, and conservation of wildlife, and the promotion of tourism.

Gamewatchers Safaris and Porini Camps have set up a camp containing 9 furnished tents for guests, with en-suite bathrooms consisting of a shower, washbasin and flush toilet. These solar-powered tents can cater to a maximum of 18 guests at a time. Porini operates weekly safaris to the Amboseli Porini Camps to support the Selenkay Community in wildlife conservation.

Community Benefits
From the partnership with Porini the community receives rent from the lease agreement and entry fee from each tourist. According to the lease agreement, Porini has an exclusive lease on the Conservation Area for 15 years but with the option to extend. It pays annual rent for exclusive rights to the Conservation Area, increasing at the rate of 10% a year. In addition, Porini pays entry fees to the Group Ranch for all visitors entering the Conservation Area, as well as bed night fees for visitors staying overnight. The Selenkay committee uses the income generated from the lease and bed night to pay hospital bills and school fees for community members, to buy a water pump, and to send the Conservation Area’s warden to a KWS training school.

Local labour is a key source of employment for the people, who carry out wildlife patrols in their capacity as Community Game Scouts and are involved in road construction and maintenance.
Apart from making the lease payments Porini Camps has helped the community repair its windmill pump, provided uniforms for the Community Game Scouts, contributed funds towards developing the primary school and kindergarten, and deepened an existing watering hole for community livestock. According to Jake Grieves-Cook, the managing director of Gamewatchers and Porini Camps, they expect the group Ranch’s income to increase significantly as they made about US$ 20,000 last year. This is in addition, to the 43 Maasai employed in the Porini Camp, which contributes to another US$50,000.

Porini and Selenkay Group Ranch are still committed towards promoting wildlife conservation and improving the livelihood of the surrounding community. Porini targets 1,000 visitors a year, to be able to hire more people from the community as its staff.

The partnership between Selenkay Group Ranch Committee and Porini Camps looks bright as the group has recently renewed its lease agreement which will see the current contract between the Masai clans owning the land, and Porini extended until 2026.
The eco-tourism necessity

Generating 10.7% of the world’s GDP, tourism is the largest industry in the world and the second-largest in Kenya; therefore there is a greater need to conserve the resources and value the local culture and tradition, which are collectively referred to as eco-tourism.

The UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defined sustainable tourism in 1988 as “meeting the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economics, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes and biological diversity and life support systems”.

Why is eco-tourism important in Kenya, and the world as a whole? Organizations that practice sustainable measures can apply for an audit which provides them with the opportunity to be commended for their products in service-providers’ catalogues, through, sustainability logos. This will create a brand image to the corporate sector that will strengthen the market’s position, especially in periods of tough economic decline.

The sustainability concept also provides suppliers with advice and support tools to improve their environment and social performance, such as providing training handbooks on sustainable products, suppliers, and benchmarking management tools to help in the management of energy, waste, and water consumption. Certification schemes, awards programs and voluntary initiatives enable the private sector to demonstrate its commitment to tourism development. Such sustainability measures create a strong platform as a basis for positioning a tourism product or travel company in relation to its competitors. This leads to greater efficiency in operations, and also add value to the visitor or customer experience. Thus there is customer commitment to practice sustainable measures, which increases turnover or profit.

Sustainable measures should be embraced in order to take the tourism industry to another level in order to reduce negative environment impact and commercialization of culture which poses a great threat to the tourism industry.

Businesses that practice such measures experience strong repeat business and positive viral marketing, critical elements to any marketing strategy especially during tough economic times. Such companies can also access capital such as loans due to social environment criteria used. This approach to management contributes to a company’s increase in productivity, through best usage of available resources and the avoidance of waste; this reduces the company’s cost of operation.
Ecotourism also contributes to government revenue, foreign exchange and generation of employment. Ecotourism increases government revenue directly through income tax from tourism business, and indirectly from taxes on tickets, souvenirs, alcohol and services from tour operators. The export and import of related goods and services generates income to host communities. Tourism is thus a significant source of foreign exchange, earning for at least 38% of all countries. Eco-tourism will create more indirect job opportunity which will create more job opportunities which will stimulate infrastructure, better roads and sewage systems.

Eco-tourism leads to sound and efficient environmental management of tourism facilities, especially hotels; it thus can decrease its impact on the environment. This avoids gradual deterioration of quality environmental goods and services significant to tourism industry.

Through the interaction between guest and hosts ecotourism preserves culture and protect heritage. It thus promotes peace, and fosters understanding between people and culture.

In conclusion ecotourism provides more long-lasting advantages of for our industries, especially in the sustenance of the tourism industry not as a mere short-term money making enterprise but as a venture that benefits all its current and future stakeholders.

Steve M. Mwangi is a Managing Director, at Anste Tours & Travel Limited, E-mail: anstetours@anstegroup.com, stevemwangi@anstegroup.com Website: www.anstetravel.com
dish to die for - Magera Island

Magera Island sits in Lake Victoria (within Bondo County of Nyanza Province in Kenya. The 12 square-km island is located about 440 km west of the capital Nairobi, and has an approximate population of 200 people. The island has diverse birdlife including cormorants, egrets and fish eagles. Monitor lizards, a common predator of eggs and birds on the island, are also in abundance. The people of Magera Island are mainly fishermen.

On a recent EK familiarization trip to Magera Island, we savored the dishes generously offered by Magera people to the delight of all.

After exchanging long greetings and acquaintance,

our host quickly offered fish prepared in three different styles – deep-fried, stewed, and steamed – accompanied by brown ugali with kachumbari (a mix of chopped tomatoes and onions) and murenda, a local vegetable. The deep-fried fish was salty and crunchy; the tomato-laden stew with just a touch of chopped onion went down well with the fish and ugali, while the steamed fish was quite soft, which made it easy to pick the flesh from the bones.

As my colleagues and I were busy ‘turning the cassette’ – the city dwellers’ reference to the technique of eating one side of a fish then the other – the cat, Nyambura constantly purred while brushing herself against our legs, demanding for its share of the visitors’ meal.

Porridge made from a mixture of fermented millet and arrow roots sealed the deal in the belly. Served in king-size mugs, it tasted like warm sugared muesli. We were completely stuffed by the time we left Magera Island, and packed the arrow roots to snack on during the journey back to Nairobi.

How to get there

To get to Magera Island from Nairobi, take the Kisumu - Busia Road, then Obote Road to get to Bondo. From Bondo, head northwest to Bus Park Rd past the Main St in Usenge to get to the Fisheries Department boats docking bay and jetty. From here hire a boat from one of the local fishermen to take you to Magera Island, which is about 5kms from Mageta Island.

Have you eaten a Dish to Die For in your recent travels? We would love to hear about it – send it to editorial@ecotourismkenya.org

By Phoebe Munyoro
Fast forward twenty-five years, and 38-year-old Chila and his friends are no longer spectators, but actors in the tourism industry. Operating as Encore Youth Group, Chila and his friends now collect waste paper from the Governors’ Camp collection centers in Nairobi, and recycle it into briquettes that the group markets as an alternative fuel source.

Governors Camp’s zero waste policy ensures that all waste is sorted and recycled. In their effort to involve communities, Governors’ Camp has partnered with Chila’s Encore Youth Group in a mutually beneficial relationship, whereby the camp’s waste is turned into briquettes that guarantee income and improved livelihoods for the community. At the same time, the briquettes help protect the environment by offering an alternative energy source. Governors’ Camp uses the briquettes to run their water heating systems, greatly reducing expenditure on non-renewable fuel sources.

Chila’s briquette-making venture offers much-needed employment to otherwise idle youth, further benefiting the community. The benefits run both ways, with tourism investors attracting more travelers due to less forest degradation, and communities getting profits from waste generated by tourist accommodation, further reinforcing the impetus to conserve the natural environment.

At the Encore Youth Group quarterly review meeting, the mood is a far cry from the casual interest and slight annoyance that characterised their childhood interaction with tourism activities. Their sense of satisfaction and self-worth is evident in their attitude. The success of Encore Youth Group’s briquette-making shows that involving communities as active players and beneficiaries in the tourism sector helps to conserve the environment—to the benefit of both investors and communities.

Governors Camp’s zero waste policy ensures that all waste is sorted and recycled appropriately.

Conservation and tourism

Briquettes promote environment conservation by reducing the stress on natural resources, especially firewood, which is the most exploited fuel. Use of briquettes as an alternative fuel source considerably promotes forest conservation, a natural habitat for wildlife. The tourism industry is largely dependent on wildlife.
Tupande Pamoja is a tree planting initiative aimed at rehabilitating Kenya’s forests, through the promotion of responsible consumer behaviour. The initiative utilizes a multi-stakeholder approach in forest conservation, by linking the private sector with selected forest neighbourhood communities.

On May 20th 2011, the Mount Kenya Tourism Circuit Association with support from Tupande Pamoja planted a total of 2,500 trees. This was done over an area of 20 hectares in the Gathiuru forest, part of the Mt. Kenya ecosystem. Mt. Kenya is a World Heritage Site and a water catchment area for the Tana, the largest river in Kenya, and the Ewaso Nyiro in the north. However, its ecosystem is threatened by charcoal burning, logging, harvesting of firewood, forest fires, and grazing.

Africa Point.com has taken the Tupande Pamoja campaign to the social media, in order to create awareness on the need to plant trees in the Mt Kenya Ecosystem. Using Facebook and Twitter, AfricaPoint together with other partners has pledged to donate one seedling to be planted on the Mt. Kenya water-tower, for every ‘Like’ or Tweet about the initiative. To partner with Tupande Pamoja in this venture visit the AfricaPoint website http://www.africa-point.com.
The company was started in the 1990s as Guerba expeditions by a British National who was passionate about adventure. After he left, the then directors continued running the baton and have moved the organization into greater heights. About 3 years ago, they were approached by Intrepid and got into an agreement to be their ground handlers. Intrepid offers packaged tours.

Intrepid Guerba deals with small group adventures, their unique selling points include:
- Promoting responsible travel
- Enhancing local interaction,
- Monitoring customers’ feedback
- Offering discounted rates to repeat clients.

Under Intrepid Guerba Kenya responsible travel policy, they encourage and support local communities. They also vet where the clients will stay which has to be owned by a local. They also purchase groceries from the local market and also make direct payments for accommodation and food.

Intrepid receives about 5,000 guests per year. It is against company policy to use polythene bags. The firm provides bags for their guests to use for groceries. They encourage their clients to undertake home-stays though in Kenya they do not undertake them; they also visit Lelin Overland Campsite in Iten, Kerio Valley, and Mweiga for tea plantation walks and Kariandusi School Trust that offers advance education of children in the rural rift valley region. In Arusha their clients pick and roast coffee, learn how to milk a cow and undertake a Biogas project.

They are currently supporting 4 projects in East Africa:
1. Amani Children’s Home - provides a loving home, education and medical care for street children and orphans in and around Moshi, Tanzania.
2. Village Education Project - provide improved primary and vocational education to Tanzanian children in the Marangu region in the foothills of Kilimanjaro.
4. Kariandusi School Trust - advancing the education of Kenyan children in the rural Rift Valley region by working with the community to construct, equip and staff schools where they are much needed.

They forge partnerships with communities where they agree on rates for a year for a whole year, they further inspect the homes offering home stays to ensure that conducive accommodation is offered by hosts.

When a client donates money to support a certain product or initiative, like the Kariandusi School project it is matched dollar for dollar by Intrepid Travel.

They market their tours through their website and reviews through social media like facebook. Also, they check and measure their quality service by noting the number of repeat and customers referred to them through word of mouth.

Pricing rates is one of the main challenges that they face due to low guests numbers in their packaged tours as Intrepid cannot control the number of clients who come. Also there is also the looming threat of insecurity like theft of clients’ belongings.

Their tour leaders are not encouraged to get commissions, if they get they are put in a kitty and use it collectively. Also their tour leaders help in marketing the CBTEs by suggesting new and viable homestays to visit.

Differences between community groups in East Africa and Southern Africa; in Kenya majority of the community groups display their products on shukas/khangas mostly on the ground or carry their wares to peddle which makes the clients feel that they are being coerced to buy their merchandise. As compared to countries such as Namibia for example, where they have their products labeled, with price tags and the name of the designer; this makes the clients feel that the enterprise are coordinated and regulated.

More information can be found at: www.theintrepidfoundation.org and www.intrepidtravel.com

Do you have a story on how you collaborate with the local community? We would love to hear from you, send us your story to editorial@ecotourismkenya.org
Advertising rates 2011

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To place an advert in the upcoming issue, send your artwork in full color on a CD saved as Tiff, EPS or JPEG with a minimum resolution of 300dpi and accompanied by an actual size colour proof in order to meet colour quality standards. If your artwork is not supplied with the colour proof, EK will not be held responsible for colour variation of any kind.

Booking and artwork submission deadline is:
28th February for the 1st Quarter; 23rd May; 22nd August and 21st November for the other quarters respectively. Cancellations made after this date will be subject to a 75% cancellation fee.

For further information contact:
Phoebe Munyoro on 2724403 or email info@ecotourismkenya.org

Editorial Policy

Highlight of the EK Editorial Policy
The Editorial Policy is used as a guideline for publishing this quarterly magazine for EK members and non-members. The magazine targets all players in the tourism industry how we aim to aim to interest, inform and empower. The wordage should be between 700 and 1000 words. The content should promote tourism practices that conserve Kenya’s natural environment and improve the livelihoods of associated communities. The language use shall be for the average reader; highly technical or academic language, plagiarism and clichés should be avoided. The use of photos should be appropriate with the content and permission and accredits to the photographer should be accorded. Contributors are encouraged to consult Ecotourism Kenya at any point during their writing. The editor may not to publish editorials or advertising that could be construed as being defamatory in nature. Also, the Editor has the right to review, edit and/or reject articles for reasons of content, quality, length or post-deadline submission. Submissions to the EK Magazine should be sent to the Editor at info@ecotourismkenya.org
Information about EK Publications

Ecotourism Kenya is currently producing three publications: Green Directory, Ecotourism Kenya Guide and Natural Magazine. These publications are distributed by Ecotourism Kenya to among others: travelers, tour operators, holiday makers, Community Based Organizations, Government Agencies, Media, Hoteliers, Airlines among others. In addition the publications are distributed by Kenya Tourist Board (KTB) to Trade Fairs, Exhibitions, Overseas Tourist Offices and Trade Partners across the world.

Green Directory:
The Directory is a publication that showcases: producers or suppliers of “green” products or services, which can be items made from recycled or 100% natural materials, people or facilities that undertake Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) and Environmental Audits (EA) or offer consultancy services for tourism or environment related projects. The charges are ksh.250 per listing. An eBook version can be found linked onto the Ecotourism Kenya website.

Ecotourism Kenya Guide:
The Guide profiles EK members, tourism accommodation facilities ecocertified under the EK Ecocerting Certification Scheme and Community Based Organisations (CBOs), an eBook version is linked to the Ecotourism Kenya website. The Guide, which is larger than the directory offers more space for a profile of the facility, postal and physical address, telephone number, web page, email, fax address and a colour picture. All EK members are entitled to a free basic listing in the guide.

EK Magazine:
This is EK’s mouthpiece on issues affecting the Tourism Industry in issues relating to ecotourism and sustainable tourism. Contributors are encouraged to submit content that promotes tourism practices that conserve Kenya’s natural environment and improve the livelihoods of associated communities.

To advertise or submit articles to the EK Publications should be sent to the Editorial Team at, editorial@ecotourismkenya.org

Nakuru Wildlife Conservancy
Together for Conservation

VISION: A prosperous society that manages the environment and natural resources sustainably

The NWC has maintained up to 400,000 acres of wildlife habitat intact, with 97% of all wildlife in Nakuru and Naivasha districts. This habitat is home to over 60,000 wild animals.

We have supported 5 community groups establish viable ecotourism businesses in partnership with Pact-Kenya/USAID around Naivasha and Gilgil districts. These are Lake Elementaita Ecotourism, Kedong Ranch, Ututu Conservancy Self Help Group, Mt. Longonot Guides and Forters Club, and Nature and People Network (NAPNET) of Eburru.
Situated in the Great Rift Valley, Lake Nakuru Lodge is an African Safari Accommodation in Kenya. Within a wonderland which lies in the heart of one of Kenya’s most densely animal populated wetland national parks (Ramsar Site), only two hours leisurely drive on first class roads from Nairobi, through some of the most exciting scenery to be seen anywhere in Africa. The 156 km Nairobi-Nakuru roads gives the visitor an unrivalled view of the majestic Great Rift Valley, winding through a series of lakes and forested uplands all the way to the bustling market town of Nakuru. The views are equally impressive for the visitor who uses a charter aircraft for 25-minute flight to Lake Nakuru National Park airstrip situated at the southern side of the park at the Rhino Sanctuary Headquarters – Naishi.

Situated in the South East Ecological niche of the park is Lake Nakuru Lodge, an oasis of comfort and excellent service, with commanding views of the lesser flamingo dotted with the Greater Flamingo for which Lake Nakuru is justly famous. It is another world for the visitor, where one easily forgets the hustle and bustle of the city. The lodge blends well with its surrounding and the animals often browse peacefully close to the lodge and environs, much to the fascination of the visitors. There are accommodations for 180 people, either in family rooms, deluxe cottages, or suites. The service is unmatched anywhere in Kenya, a country renowned for hospitality.

There is excellent cuisine, which includes outside catering, Bush Barbecue, African night and Sundowners. After a days watching, the spacious logged Mama Nikki bar, the cool upstairs Rhino Paddock Cocktail Bar overlooking the lake and the enticing blue swimming pool can be particularly inviting. Evening entertainment and slide shows for guests is interesting and varied. The Baboon Cliff lookout sits next to Honeymoon Hill, just relax and enjoy the view.

We are a member of the Friends of Lake Nakuru/Elementaita Ramsar Site, Lake Nakuru Lodge and also support the following:

- Reduction of the threat to wetland of international importance.
- The conservation of ecological character of the park. (maintenance of the natural integrity to flora and fauna).
- Education and public awareness. Community conservation - soil erosion and tree planting.
- Pollution and Eco-tourism - nature friendly.
- Promoting and sustaining Derit community for development and money creating projects.

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African Fund for Endangered Wildlife (K) Ltd. — Giraffe Centre

A.F.E.W. Kenya was founded in 1979 by the late Jock Leslie Melville and his American wife the late Betty. Their vision was to save the endangered Rothschild’s giraffe as well as establish an Education Centre. The Giraffe Centre was opened to the general public in 1993 and is located in the suburbs of Karen-Hardy area about 15Kms from the Nairobi City Centre. The Centre is open Seven Days a week from 9.00 am to 5.30 pm where visitors have a rare opportunity to feed the giraffes in close proximity and for the daring ones to get a kiss. Guided walks are conducted within an expansive dry forest where rare birds can be sighted.

The Centre is open free of charge to learning institutions who have made prior booking during the week days as from 9.00 am to 12.00 pm. We however encourage donations from the visiting institutions which are directed towards the Ecology trip programme for the underprivileged children in Nairobi and its environs. For more information kindly contact the Giraffe Centre using the contacts below.

Programmes

- Conservation of the Endangered Rothschild’s Giraffe
- Ecology Trip Programme for the Underprivileged Children
- Workshops on Sustainable Environmental Conservation
- Environmental Education & Awareness
- Financial Support to Conservation Projects
- Biodiversity Welfare

Our Facilities

- Raised Giraffe Feeding Platform
- Auditoriums for Lectures and watching wildlife films
- Daisy Zoovenir Shop
- Tea house
- Nature Trail

Our Contacts

Giraffe Centre
A.F.E.W—K. Ltd.
P.O.Box 15214—00509, Nairobi Kenya
Tel: +254 734 880 952/ 123 786 165
Email: info@giraffecenter.org
Website: www.giraffecenter.org

A.F.E.W another way of saying “Endangered”