

International Vulture Awareness Day

Theme: Celebrating Africa's Vulture's

Report

October 2009

Supported by:

- *National Museums of Kenya*
- *African Bird Club*
- *The Peregrine Fund*
- *Nature Kenya*
- *Wildlife Clubs of Kenya*

Introduction

The international vulture awareness day (IVAD) is organized internationally to sensitise communities on the plight of vultures world wide. We organized the Kenya activities for the IVAD. On the weekend of 5th and 6th September 2009, to coincide with Nature Kenya's a Nature Fair at the museum grounds. This promised to be a fun filled weekend attracting a large albeit city dwelling crowd made up of people from different communities among them many schools will participating.

The task of organizing the activities of the IVAD was expertly guided by Dr Darcy Ogada who was the pillar behind the formation of the Raptor Working Group, a sub-committee of Nature Kenya's Bird Committee. Other members of the RWG at the time were Munir Virani, Indi Bilkhu, Chege Kariuki, Peter Njoroge, Simon Thomsett and Martin Odino.

The RWG's main goal is to help protect Kenya's raptor by being a platform for education and public outreach. Therefore, the group is made up not only of scientists, but also others with an interest in raptors and other complementing skills that will be beneficial to help us achieve our goal. We are very excited about the challenge. The groups first ever activity was to organize the IVAD.

After several meetings the group managed to attract a very large number of local partners who pledged their support towards making IVAD a major success. Our activities for the event included the following:

1) A nationwide art competition targeting children from kindergarten to teenagers (4 categories). The categories included the following

- Kindergarten ages 2-5 yrs
- Lower primary ages 6-9 yrs
- Upper primary ages 10-14 yrs
- Secondary – 15 and above

- the theme for the vulture completion was "**the role of vultures in maintaining the cycle of life**";

For the art competition the group prepared an art competition poster that was distributed country wide with the following main targets via the Wildlife Clubs of Kenya (WCK) regional education offices located in Malindi, Mombasa, Mukurwieni, Nairobi, Kitui, Nakuru and Kisumu (also reaches Eldoret, Mara and Kakamega). We also targeted other places that are vulture hotspots such as Elsamere and Meru/Samburu/Isiolo via Lewa. If we have additional posters we could distribute to Provincial Education Offices via public relations person at Jogoo Hse.

2) Audio-visual material about vultures to be shown at IVAD- The RWG produced DVD of a vulture poisoning incident at Athi River where over 120 vultures died. The DVD was distributed freely at the IVAD

3) A theatrical performance (puppet show) from an arts group that will highlight the plight of vultures and especially touch on the threat of poisoning

4) Sale of T-shirts and other "vulture-related items"

5) Radio and TV air time to talk to the general public about the importance of vultures

6) Other children activities- including painting of vultures scenes

Outcomes

Art competition – There were approximately 400 entries for the competition mainly coming from Nairobi, Mombasa, central Laikipia, Magadi and north Isiolo (Lewa). We did not get entries from many of the areas we expected to including the Masai Mara. This first competition was a learning experience for the group and next time we hope the coverage will be extended and there will be more entries. The criteria for judging the winners was 1) artistic ability, 2) adherence to the theme, and 3) creativity. The winners in the four categories were decided and the list of winners is as follows:

Secondary School (15-19 yrs)

1st Kevin Otieno, Dawamu Secondary School, Kiserian

2nd Stephen Okoth, Dawamu Secondary School, Kiserian

3rd Njeri Mati, Peponi School, Juja

Special Mention James Kamau, Eastleigh High School, Eastleigh

Upper Primary (10-14 yrs) (this category was particularly competitive, thus we awarded 3 special mentions)

1st Olivia Mukhopadhyay, Oshwal Academy, Mombasa

2nd Ekaaz Lopeyok, Mpala School, Laikipia

3rd Sheila Selian, Magadi Junior, Magadi

Special Mention Ernest Ochieng, Kimathi Primary, Nairobi

Special Mention Vruti Shah, Oshwal Academy, Mombasa

Special Mention name unknown, Box 39735, Nairobi

Lower Primary (6-9 yrs)

1st Manthan Patel, Oshwal Academy, Mombasa

2nd Wilson, Mpala School, Laikipia

3rd Collins Lowasa, Mpala School, Laikipia

Special Mention Khush Shah, Oshwal Academy, Mombasa

Kindergarten (2-5 yrs) (there were few entries in this category, so we awarded only two prizes)

1st Steve Zablun Mtekele, Santokben Nursery School

2nd Devika, Waldorf Kindergarten

Two Paintings (Vultures at a Carcass and Vultures at Sunset, see pictures below) that were done by Watoto ya Kwetu Trust were to be auctioned with all proceeds going to the trust.

The International Vulture Awareness Day in Pictures (all pictures by *Munir Virani*)



The vulture Stand at the Nature Fair, with Mr Titus Kaai the vulture awareness ambassador talking visitors

Mr Kaai doing a radio talk during the IVAD (below)



Laila with the Vulture suit



The painting “vultures at a kill” by watoto wa Kwetu trust gets going (left) while kids are engaged in various drawing activities (right) during the IVAD.



Kids from the Watoto wa Kwetu trust painting “the vultures at a Kill” painting(top) while the final “master piece” as done by the kids (bottom)



Puppet show was a big draw for the kids



Mpala School ,Laikipia, winners of the art competition with their book presents