



FRIENDS OF FORT JESUS

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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/FFJmombasa/>

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## NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2019

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Dear Friends,

The Flipflop dhow made from plastics salvaged from Lamu beaches has become an icon of the African plastic revolution. The Flipflop set sail from Lamu on January 24<sup>th</sup> for a 500km journey to Zanzibar with stops at various places en-route. It is scheduled to arrive in Zanzibar on 7<sup>th</sup> February. This UNEP funded project aims to focus attention on the dangers of plastic pollution.

Last week it called at a crowded Jomo Kenyatta public beach. It anchored off shore - a lucky few were ferried to see the dhow and marvel the ingenuity of a spirited group of people who are committed to making a difference. There were plenty of pledges for a cleaner environment from the dignitaries present and the message that plastic pollution must be tackled is getting across. In Watamu, Flipflop's arrival was well marked by a beach clean-up by school children. Staff from EcoWorld, the famous recycling centre was at hand and used the opportunity to teach locals how to use waste. The dhow building took three years to fruition. It is a credit to the dedicated team of volunteers led by Lamu's master dhow craftsman, Ali Sikanda and Dipak Pabari a Kenya entrepreneur.

'Everybody is inspired by our project and the message is being delivered' says a delighted Sikanda.

A post from the East African Natural History Society reports that in November last year NMK's bird ringing group welcomed back a Common Nightingale which was ringed by the Ornithology Section at National Museums on March 2018 and was re-caught on 11<sup>th</sup> November at the same ringing location.

Birds migrate to escape harsh winters in the North, and go back to their breeding grounds in summer. It's phenomenal for tiny birds like a Common Nightingale to travel thousands of kilometres and find its way back into the same nets months later. Assuming the bird travelled from its nearest breeding ground, Turkey, it will have travelled at least 9,000km to and from Nairobi.

As the threats to birds including loss of habitat, climate change, poisoning and illegal trapping increases, we hope our Common Nightingale will be able to make more journeys back and forth. We wish the Nightingale an enjoyable stay here at the tropics.

Invitations to our 40 year celebrations and book launch have been sent out. We have invited all our stakeholders and those who have supported FFJ since the start of society in 1978. We look forward to a great evening in your company!

Taibali Hamzali, Chairman

## PAST PROGRAMMES

Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> January

### Visit to Diani Regatta, Safari Beach Hotel



Kudos to South Coast Community Eco-Tourism Association (SCCEA) for organizing another very successful regatta - an annual event that is now a regular feature of the south coast calendar.

After a smooth ferry crossing and traffic free journey our group of 9 arrived at the venue in good time. There were exciting acrobatic feats; much applauded by the public, mama lesso contest, exhilarating traditional dances and plenty of delicious local food sold by SCCEA community members. The Ngalawa race with nine competitors was the high point of the day.

As in the past years the festival was very well supported by the south coast fraternity and attendance was impressive. There was a festive atmosphere with plenty of food stalls and displays of local handicrafts and many of the South Cost eco organisations were represented. (Taibali Hamzali)



**Mama Lesso contest.**  
**Photo: Taibali Hamzali**

Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> January

### Bird Walk: South Quarry, Haller Park

As our host suggested we kept to Haller Park instead of looking for bird species at the adjacent South Quarry we set out to explore the ponds and forest of this reclaimed quarry along the Mombasa-Malindi highway. Thanks to eagle-eyed Kelvin one of our first birds to spot was a Little Sparrowhawk followed a little later by Egyptian Geese and a Striated Heron, which had just got himself, what looked like a catfish for early dinner. Within no time it swallowed the entire fish and took up position again to capture more food. At the hippo pond we found intermediate (or Yellow-billed) Egrets and a Great White Egret on top of a partially submerged hippo, a sight we have been treated to on previous visits as well. On to the fish ponds, where the over-wintering Grey Wagtail has been staying for the last few years and there it was, all fluffed up after a bath in some shallow



**Striated Heron. Photo: Doris Schaule**

puddle. Most of the species we recorded around the crocodile pond: Little Egret, Pied Kingfisher, Village Weaver, one lone Eastern Golden Weaver, Woolly-necked Stork, Grey Heron, a Palm-nut Vulture overhead and a fleeing Giant Kingfisher! There was also a large raptor at a distance, we were not sure about...could have been a Wahlberg's Eagle, it didn't give us enough time to properly identify it. By

the time we ended our 2 ½ hrs bird walk we had recorded 28 beautiful species!

We thank LafargeHolcim Eco Systems, for facilitating our visit as well as the participating FFJ bird watchers for dedicating this Saturday afternoon to Kenya's avifauna! (Doris Schaule)

## Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> January **The Magic of Ireland by Marlene Reid**

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Our long time chairperson Marlene Reid has retired to Northern Ireland but is back for a month in Mombasa. She gave us some quick facts and background about Northern Ireland which belongs to UK and is nowadays often in media due to the uncertainty of the consequences of UK leaving EU. Nobody wants a "hard border" to the Republic of Ireland which is an EU-member.

We then saw two films featuring the lovely landscape with dramatic cliffs on the coast, old ruins of castles etc. Very special features are the hexagonal huge crystals of lava. Many places are connected to ancient legends and stories of giants and other mysterious beings. The farmer's small fields separated with ditches with bushes and trees makes a very good landscape for flowers, insects, birds and small game.

Marlene had also brought with her Irish biscuits for us all, some 30 people who had turned up for the pleasant evening. The speaker of the evening usually receives a gift, in this case the latest book by Judy Aldrick about Sir Ali bin Salim. But Marlene had also a gift to the chairman, the specialty Irish potato bread. Attempts to make the potato bread here for evening had not been a success and brought some laughter. The Irish were heavily dependent on potatoes, thereof the name "Irish potatoes" which is actually just a kind of potatoes. The plant originates from South America. In in the middle of the 1800s there were severe crop failures for four years in a row "The Great Potato Famine. One million people starved to death and many thousand migrated to the US. (Lars Asker)

## FUTURE PROGRAMMES

### Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> February **Bird Walk: Nguuni Nature Sanctuary**

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This months bird walk is at Nguuni Nature Sanctuary. Meet at the Reception office at 3.00pm sharp. Please note there is a 300/= entrance fee. For more information see our Facebook page or contact: Doris Schaule Tel: 07rd walk 22 277752. Email: [dorischuale@gmail.com](mailto:dorischuale@gmail.com)

### Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> February at 6.45pm **40 year celebration and launch of publication: FFJ Story**

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This special evening is open to all FFJ members and invited guests who include all those who have been involved with the society over the past 40 years. The committee members have been working very hard to put together a varied programme. After a few short speeches we will launch the 40 Year book. We have lined up a multicultural entertainment – music dance and poetry by artistes from Swahilipot Hub, Kerala Group and Phyllip Zimmerlan's ensemble There will be refreshments courtesy of FFJ. Please do make a special effort to attend.

### DIARY FOR FEBRUARY Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> February: **Bird walk, South Quarry, Haller Park** Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> February: **FFJ 40 year celebration and book launch**

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