IMPACT REPORT | 2025

A ROCHA KENYA

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A ROCHA KENYA

The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him.

Psalms 24:1

African Golden Oriole

Message from the National Director

Without any doubt, we live in a time in the planet's history when there is a constant awareness of habitats and species in often steep decline, and ecosystems groaning under the impact of human greed and ignorance.

As a conservation organisation, A Rocha works at the nexus between people, from corporates to local communities, and the diverse, and frequently delicate, wildlife and ecosystems where we live.

Over the years, A Rocha Kenya has grown from two staff in 2001 to now over 55, with many more volunteers contributing to the achievements you will read about in the following pages. Our first staff was a birdwatcher and a teacher, so it's not surprising (!) that, as we have grown, we have needed to adapt and put in place better systems and structures.

2025 has been a year in which several growth pains have been keenly felt, but there has also definitely been a sense of 'breathing fresh air' as we have been blessed to bring on board skilled help and, assisted by partners and individuals alike, address key issues and become stronger.

A Rocha's tag line is 'Conservation and Hope', and I trust that, as you read the stories below, you will capture that red thread of hope running through all that we have been able to do. I find it an awesome privilege to work under and alongside a God who brings the ultimate hope in life, and who chooses to work with us in both our strengths and weaknesses to have an impact and bring hope to people and to his creation.

That hope is there in the regenerating coral colonies among acres of otherwise bleached and dying reef; in the lives changed and futures given to the children supported by our Arabuko Sokoke Schools and Eco-Tourism Scheme (ASSETS); in surveys that confirmed Sokoke Scops Owls in the Dakatcha Nature Reserve, albeit at lower numbers than hoped for, but with an expectancy that as the forest regenerates, the population can grow; and in the blessing of A Rocha International sending people to help us transition to a more efficient and better-designed finance system, alongside new skilled staff to strengthen that work and our fundraising efforts.

Each butterfly recorded, each tree measured, each student attending secondary school, and each new coral growing reflects that hope, which ultimately we have in a God who cares for this world and who gives purpose to all that we are and do. I trust you can inhale that sense of hope through the ensuing stories.

Dr. Colin Jackson, Founder and Director, A Rocha Kenya

Who we are

A Rocha Kenya (ARK) is one of 21 national organisations of A Rocha, an international Christian conservation organisation that is committed to practical biodiversity conservation through scientific research, environmental education and sustainable community-based conservation programmes.

A Rocha bases its work on the recognition that the Bible clearly teaches about the importance of caring for the environment as God's creation.

The Bible speaks about God's love for his world and of our responsibility to look after it. Ours is a mandate to care for the earth. To use it, yes, but wisely and not to over-exploit, destroy or degrade it.

Our Vision, Mission & Core Commitments

VISION

Nature conserved & people transformed

MISSION

To conserve and restore threatened habitats and biodiversity through research, environmental action, advocacy and community empowerment

We follow Jesus Christ, who created the world and calls us to care for it.

We protect and restore nature and are committed to local places and people over the long term.

We celebrate the insights, perspectives and solutions offered by our diverse cultures.

We invest in good relationships through our commitment to God, one another and the wider creation.

We seek to work with anyone who shares our vision.

Cover image

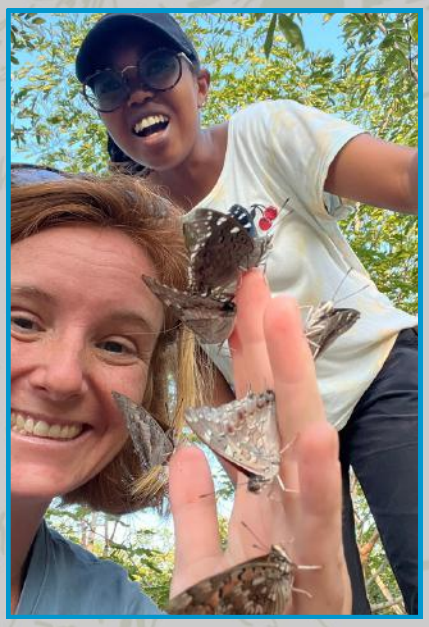
Lempi holding a Mangrove Kingfisher during a Thursday morning ringing session at Mwamba

Where we work

The work of A Rocha is touching the lives of thousands of people all around the world. A Rocha Kenya works in local landscapes, rooting itself in Watamu, Nairobi and Dakatcha.

Kenyan Coast

Our main offices are located in Watamu, Kenya. A Rocha Kenya's Mwamba Field Study Center is 3km from Turtle Bay, with a guest house that offers accommodation to more than 20 people. We host a range of guests, from researchers, to honeymooners or holiday makers.

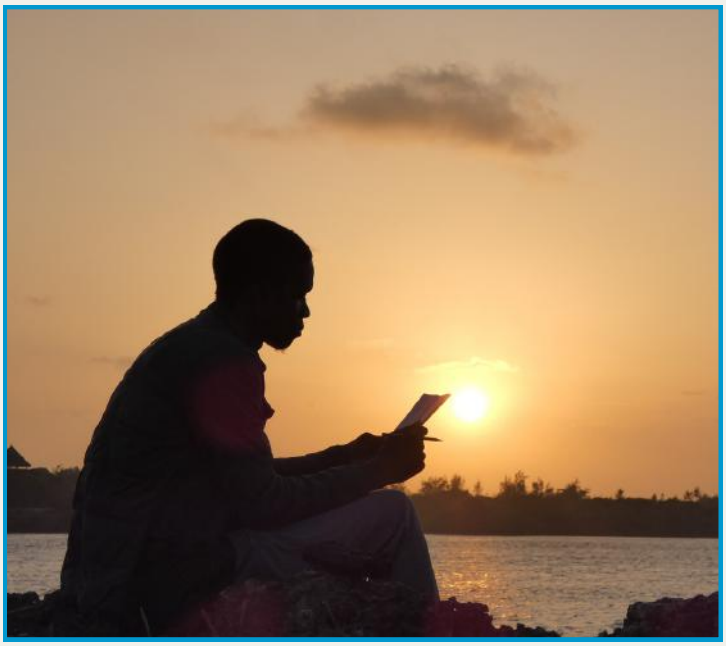


A Rocha Kenya's work here includes marine research, terrestrial science, community work, environmental education and care for creation.

Located by the beach, be sure to catch all the fun in the ocean and our nature trails for those in love with nature and birds. A Rocha Kenya extends its work north of Malindi, in Dakatcha, where we are buying land for conservation.

Karen, Nairobi

In Nairobi, A Rocha Kenya is at Karara in Karen, where most of environmental education and community conservation is advocated through working with different schools, community members and churches. Karara has an indigenous tree nursery and nature trails where important knowledge on indigenous trees and different types of animals, insects and birds can be acquired.



Introduction

Some years pass almost unnoticed. One moment it is January, and the next, December 31st. Other years gather themselves more slowly. They are marked by night sounds in the forest, shifting tides under moonlight, classrooms alive with questions, and landscapes that, little by little, reveal what they have been holding.

This was one of those years.

Across Dakatcha Woodland, Mida Creek, Sabaki River Estuary, Watamu Marine Park, and the communities that surround them, our work deepened, sometimes through small, careful steps and at other times through big, decisive action.

It was also a year of renewal. After several years of poor rainfall, abundant rains throughout much of the year transformed the landscape. Plants flushed with colour. Some species were recorded budding and fruiting for the first time in over two decades. Dakatcha Woodland responded visibly. Even the team felt it: the relief of rain after long heat, the steadying effect of cooler days in Watamu, and the quiet encouragement that comes when life begins to return.

IDakatcha Woodland

Dakatcha Comes Alive

As the season shifted in Dakatcha Woodland, the forest began to stir.

Red, pink, blue, and white blossoms appeared across the forest floor and canopy. These seasonal displays did more than signal the return of rain; they revealed the enduring richness of the Dakatcha ecosystem.
Despite years of pressure and degradation, there is still life here and real potential for restoration.

Dakatcha is home to IUCN Endangered species such as the Golden-rumped Sengi and Clarke's Weaver, as well as towering indigenous trees that have shaped this woodland for generations. Yet the ecosystem continues to face sustained pressure from charcoal production and small-scale farming. This year, land purchase continued as a decisive response to these ongoing pressures.

By the close of 2025, an additional 703 acres had been secured within Dakatcha Woodland under the A Rocha Kenya Dakatcha Nature Reserve initiative, bringing the total area purchased to 9,531 acres.

This was made possible through support from Rainforest Trust, World Land Trust, and the A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute, alongside many individual supporters, all of whom have played a significant role.

Each acre secured strengthens the long-term future of this landscape.

The A Rocha Dakatcha Nature Reserve Ecosystem

Research within the Reserve and neighbouring lands continues to reveal the woodland's hidden ecological value.

Listening for an Elusive Owl

In April, fieldwork began in earnest for one of Africa's most elusive birds: the Sokoke Scops Owl.

With support from the African Bird Club and the Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, the team set out to map its distribution, estimate its population size for the first time, and better understand the habitats it depends on.

Fieldwork meant early mornings and long nights: scops owl call-playback surveys, AudioMoth recorders, and weeks spent camping in the forest.

Early findings suggested a very small and scattered population. Yet persistence yielded results. During one expedition, eight owls were heard, seven were seen, and six were photographed, all within the Reserve.

For a species so rarely documented, each confirmed sighting strengthens the case for safeguarding Dakatcha, even though numbers are much lower than originally estimated.

Challenges

Progress has been steady, but not without difficulty. Two challenges have defined much of the year: rising land prices and increasing pressure from migratory pastoralist groups.

Rising Land Prices

When land purchase began in Dakatcha in 2014, the average price was KES 4,000 (US$40) per acre. By December 2025, that figure had increased more than tenfold to an average of KES 42,500 per acre. One critical plot of forest and wetland was purchased at KES 85,000 per acre. Land prices continue to rise.

This sharp increase has been driven in part by private investors purchasing land and reselling it for profit. Increased demand from pastoralist communities seeking land for livestock has also contributed. As a result, the cost of securing land has escalated significantly.

The organisation is now able to acquire fewer acres for the same financial investment, and competition for available land has intensified. In many cases, land is sold to the highest bidder, making timely acquisition increasingly urgent.

Raising the necessary funds and securing the remaining priority areas is critical if the vision of a fully established reserve is to be realised and the scops owl and sengi are to be safe for generations to come.

Migrating Pastoralists

The presence of pastoralist groups moving into Dakatcha Woodland from areas north of the IBA has brought significant challenges and required careful reflection and discernment throughout the year.

Historically, these movements were seasonal and short-term. Groups would arrive with relatively small herds of livestock during dry periods and return home once rains resumed.

In recent years, however, tens of thousands of cattle, goats, and camels have entered the woodland and remained for extended periods, in some cases for much of the year.
This prolonged presence has contributed to ecological strain in certain areas of the woodland. It has also created security concerns for scouts and neighbouring communities, whose farms and crops have also been wiped out by livestock.

The situation is complex and shaped by broader climatic and socio-economic realities beyond Dakatcha itself. We continue to seek thoughtful and constructive pathways forward, balancing ecological integrity, community wellbeing, and the long-term sustainability of the woodland.

Terrestrial Research

Birds, birds, birds...

Our terrestrial research programme continues to document Kenya's avian diversity and 2025 was a particularly active year.

Alongside regular activities such as Mwamba weekly bird ringing, the Ngulia bird migration project in Tsavo West National Park, the annual waterbird census, and monthly waterbird counts at Sabaki and Mida, we also conducted wader colour-flagging and satellite tracking at Mida. These efforts expand our ability to understand bird movements both locally and across wider flyways.

Together, these monitoring efforts provide a foundation for understanding both local ecological dynamics and long-distance migratory connectivity across continents.

Golden Pipit (Female)

Mwamba Ringing

At Mwamba, our weekly bird ringing sessions remain a cornerstone of long-term monitoring. These capture-measure-release exercises provide ongoing data on species presence, movement, and demography.

Some highlights from last year included:

Eurasian Nightjar

Nocturnal migrant making its way north for the breeding season.

Spotted Palm Thrush

Ringed at Mwamba for the first time in over 20 years of ringing

Green-backed Twinspot

The first recorded in over 20 years of ringing at Mwamba.

Ngulia Bird Migration Project, Tsavo West National Park

At Ngulia in 2025, we coordinated a team of over 50 ringers and helpers from around the world, resulting in 8,033 birds ringed. Of these, 7,289 were Palearctic migrants and 744 Afrotropical birds. This was almost 6,000 fewer than in 2024, but the season was notable in several respects.

In particular, Common Whitethroat dominated the catch (3,465 ringed) – a species that, in the early 2000s, was considered to be in clear decline relative to other migrants. On 19 November alone, 1,017 Whitethroats were ringed. This is the highest ever single-day total at Ngulia for this species, the previous record being 871 on the same date in 1995.

Additional highlights included the first Violet Wood Hoopoes ever caught at Ngulia after 56 years of ringing. 2025 was also a dramatic year for Eurasian Roller migration, with several mornings recording at least 1,000 to 2,000 birds passing the lodge in the first few hours of daylight.

These large-scale migration patterns complement the finer-grained monitoring carried out at coastal sites such as Mwamba.

Red-naped Bush-shrike

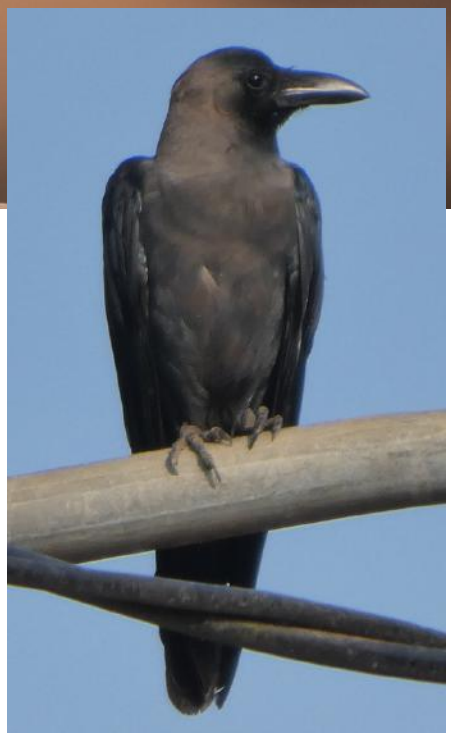
How migrants connect our worlds

A major highlight was the recovery of a Marsh Warbler ringed at Ngulia in 2024 and later recaptured in Sweden, a 7,133-kilometre journey that demonstrates the long-distance migratory connections of this species.

Marsh Warbler

Conservation Action – Crows No More!

The House Crow is indigenous to the Indian sub-continent and was introduced to East Africa first in Zanzibar in 1891. They are a serious pest and a danger to the coastal ecosystem as they kill indigenous wildlife.



In 2025, the Crows No More programme expanded from the North Coast to Mombasa Island, the South Coast, and along the Mombasa–Nairobi Road to Voi.

Alongside long-term monitoring work, this programme represents a direct conservation intervention addressing immediate ecological pressures.

Over 100,000 House Crows were culled during the year, significantly reducing predation pressure on local poultry and creating space for indigenous bird species to recover. This has been particularly noticeable in Watamu, Malindi, Kilifi, and Vipingo, where control has been in place for a year.

An additional outcome has been the bringing together of diverse stakeholders across sectors in support of the initiative. Over KSh 7 million was raised for the project, entirely from the private sector: hotels, businesses, and individuals, enabling a team of 25 people, including volunteers, to operate.

Challenges remain in transport, logistics, bait supply, and manpower, but the impact is visible.

"We've noticed at Temple Point the crows haven't come back. Every couple of weeks one or two might caw for a few minutes, but then they leave. They really won't enter our property now, not even our garage. Because of this we're seeing hornbills arrive, small bird populations grow, and our sunrise and sunsets are filled with bird songs, not the annoying caw of crows. It's a glimpse of what the coast of Kenya was always meant to sound like."

CROWS NO MORE

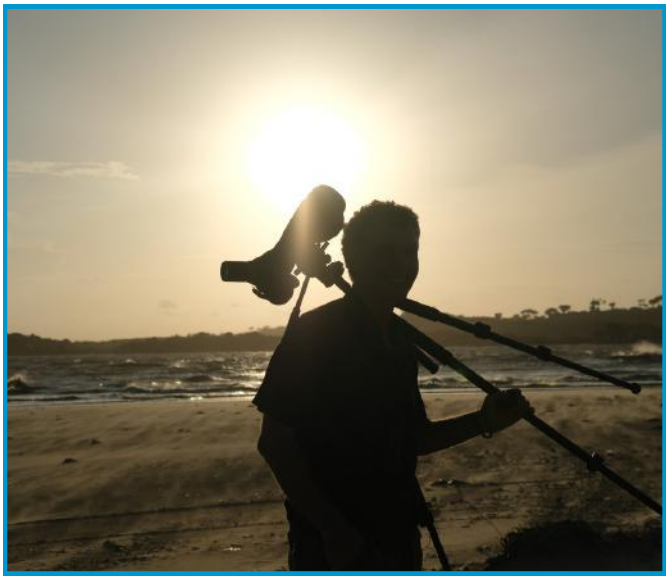
Annual Waterbird Census

The annual waterbird census takes place at the beginning of each year, typically in January and February, and is coordinated by the National Museums of Kenya as part of a country-wide effort to monitor waterbird populations.

This forms part of a wider international monitoring framework under Wetlands International, contributing to understanding population trends, species distribution, and wetland health.

A Rocha Kenya supports this national effort by organising and conducting the North Coast waterbird counts. These extend from Watamu to the Tana River Delta and cover seasonal wetlands, mudflats, riverbanks, and coastal shores.

Most of these sites have been counted annually for 27 years, and for 27 years the counts have been supported by Turtle Bay Beach Club, who provide a minibus for a full day and snacks for all counters.



In 2025, a total of 32,600 waterbirds were counted. Highlights included 8,373 Cattle Egrets in the Tana River in a single day count. Another notable record was a first-year Arctic Skua seen and photographed on the final day of the Tana Delta count. This is only the sixth record for Kenya.

This national-scale monitoring provides an important comparative context for site-based studies along the coast.

Arctic Skua at Tana Delta

Monthly Waterbird Counts at Mida and Sabaki

Long-term monthly waterbird monitoring at Sabaki River Mouth Estuary and Mida Creek remains at the heart of our coastal science programme. These two sites, surveyed since the late 1990s, are internationally important stopover and non-breeding areas for Palearctic migrant waders and resident waterbirds. Together, these long-term datasets provide one of the most comprehensive coastal monitoring records in Kenya.

Across more than two decades of monitoring, many thousands of birds of over 100 species have been recorded. We continued with this monitoring in 2025, and a notable observation during the year was a lone Goliath Heron; a species last recorded at Sabaki in January 2011.

These coastal datasets also provide an essential baseline for interpreting changes observed in broader migratory systems such as Ngulia and inland wetlands.

In 2025:

44,412 birds were counted at Sabaki River Mouth

8,950 birds maximum single-day count at Sabaki River

23,287 birds were counted at Mida Creek

4,800 birds maximum single-day count at Mida

Colour Flagging and Satellite Tracking

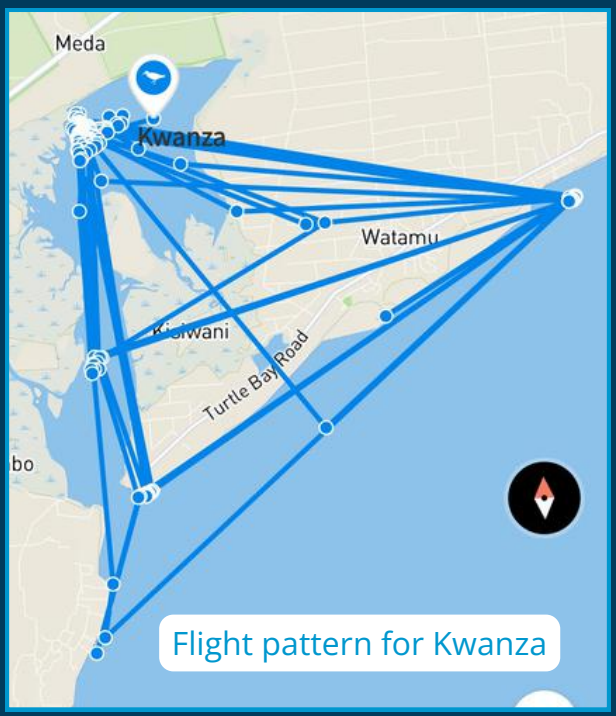
Eurasian Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*)

Tides and shorebirds are closely linked. From mid-afternoon through the night, our team worked with rising tides at Mida Creek, capturing over 140 waders across two sessions.

These targeted tracking efforts extend our understanding beyond population counts into movement ecology.

We were privileged to welcome Ward Hagemeijer of Wetlands International for one of the wader nights. Ward brought satellite transmitters for Whimbrel, a species that has been tracked in many parts of the world, but not previously along the East African flyway.

Only one Whimbrel was caught that night, but it was fitted with a solar-powered satellite transmitter and named “Kwanza” as the first Whimbrel in East Africa to be tracked. It has shown consistent triangular movements between feeding grounds north of Watamu, the mouth of Mida Creek, and a high-tide roost within Mida.



Flight pattern for Kwanza

Butterfly Surveys

Our work on butterflies continued throughout the year, focusing on Mwamba and neighbouring properties, while also extending to Dakatcha Woodland.

These insect monitoring efforts complement bird-based studies by providing additional indicators of ecosystem change.

In 2025, we recorded a total of 906 individuals out of which we got 111 butterfly species

The highlight of the year was an Axiocerses collinsi, a new find that was recorded for the first time.

Plant Phenology

Plant phenology refers to the systematic recording of seasonal plant cycles –observing when trees leaf, flower, fruit, or shed leaves, and how these patterns respond to environmental conditions.

In 2025, our team continued weekly phenology monitoring along the Mwamba Nature Trail. The year's consistent and well-distributed rains made for particularly interesting observations, with several species responding visibly to favourable conditions.

Among the highlights, Cola minor, a relatively large tree in front of the centre, fruited for the first time in recorded history at Mwamba. All monitored Afzelia quanzensis trees also produced pods, a complete set not seen in previous years.

Alongside this long-running work at Mwamba, targeted phenology monitoring began in Dakatcha Nature Reserve as part of the threatened tree conservation project. The aim is to document timing and patterns of growth, flowering, and fruiting of priority species. Understanding these cycles is essential for identifying optimal seed collection periods, improving nursery propagation success, and ensuring seedlings are transplanted at the right stage for survival in the reserve and surrounding woodland.

Watamu Privately Protected Area (PPA)

If you have visited Mwamba in Watamu, you will know the steep hill leading to the centre, which provides a view of the ocean. What is less widely known is that this hill is an ancient sand dune formed by the Sabaki River when it flowed into the Indian Ocean through what is now Mida Creek.

This geological context helps explain the exceptional biodiversity found in the surrounding habitat.

Over hundreds of years, patches of ancient sand dune forest have developed on this dune system. This habitat is now rare, as it has been removed or heavily modified in most other locations.

Over 70 hectares of this forest remain in privately owned beachfront plots. The area also includes a seasonal wetland used by large flocks of roosting waders and breeding Black-winged Stilts during the wet season.

Our studies indicate the forest and surrounding habitat support a unique assemblage of plants and animals, including 173 butterfly species, over 200 bird species, and several mammals, including the Endangered Spotted Ground Thrush and Vulnerable Sokoke Bushy-tailed Mongoose.

Given its biodiversity value, ARK is engaging with landowners to assess and register the site as an IUCN-recognised PPA.

While this does not confer legal protection by any measure, it represents a formal commitment by landowners to long-term conservation.

This is an opportunity for ARK to bring together stakeholders to support conservation of this unique ecosystem in this part of the Kenyan coast.

Release of a Long-tailed Skua

The year brought several important first records and milestones across bird and plant research. Among them was an unexpected opportunity to care for a Long-tailed Skua, a species that is exceptionally rare in Kenya.

The Long-tailed Skua is a high Arctic breeder that typically winters far offshore in the southern oceans. Inland or coastal records in East Africa are scarce, and this individual represented only the third record in the Kenya Bird Map.

The bird was rescued by Tenzin, a nine year old girl visiting from Nairobi with her family. She found the bird too weak to fly so brought it to us for help. As a first-year bird, its flight feathers were severely worn, leaving it unable to fly efficiently after a migration of several thousand kilometres.

Skuas rely on aerial pursuit and kleptoparasitism - chasing and stealing food from other seabirds, as a key feeding strategy. Without strong flight, survival becomes difficult.

The skua was taken to a partner rehabilitation centre, where over approximately ten days it was cared for and monitored, regaining weight and strength. Once it was able to fly confidently, it was ringed and released back to the ocean.

Its return to the sea was a significant moment, highlighting both the rarity of the species in Kenya and the importance of community awareness and rapid response in supporting vulnerable wildlife.

Marine Research

Our marine research continued across two interconnected systems: the shores & reefs of Watamu Marine National Park and the tidal channels of Mida Creek.

From coral restoration and elasmobranch monitoring to subtidal habitat mapping, the work remains steady, evidence-based and increasingly interconnected.

Together, these programmes are helping build a clearer understanding of how reefs, mangroves, fish populations, and larger marine species are linked within the wider coastal ecosystem.

Coral Gardening

Coral gardening is an active reef restoration approach in which healthy coral fragments are collected, primarily from naturally broken pieces, grown in underwater nurseries, and later transplanted onto degraded reef areas. The goal is to accelerate reef recovery while maintaining genetic and structural diversity.

In 2025, coral restoration in Watamu Marine National Park continued steadily, led by the A Rocha Kenya marine team with valued support and guidance from Coral Reef Care. Naturally broken fragments were rescued and stabilised.

Resilient corals from Kuruwitu, 50 km south of Watamu, including Stylophora subseriata and Porites cylindrica, species no longer present on Watamu reefs, were reintroduced in controlled trials following climate-related stress.

Monitoring remains careful and ongoing. Survival rates, bleaching response, and growth patterns guide each restoration decision. These trials are structured experiments designed to understand which species and genotypes can withstand warming events and shifting ocean conditions.

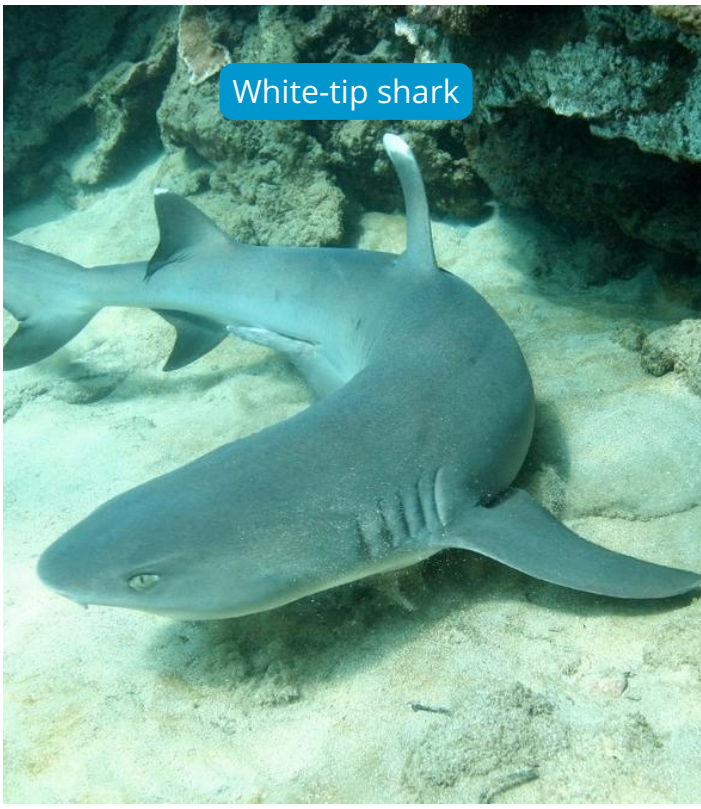
CORAL REEF CARE

Elasmobranch Monitoring

Elasmobranchs, the group that includes sharks, rays, and guitarfish, are among the most ecologically important and globally threatened marine species. They play key roles in maintaining balanced marine food webs.

For more than 15 years, our marine team has monitored these species within the Watamu marine protected area. Over this time, we have used SCUBA visual surveys, BRUVS (Baited Remote Underwater Video Systems), habitat assessments, timed swims, and beach walks to document species presence, abundance, size classes, and habitat use.

This long-term dataset has grown steadily over time and now provides an important foundation for understanding how sharks, rays, and guitarfish use coastal habitats and how these habitats can be conserved effectively.


White-tip shark

Mapping Mida Creek: Hidden Nurseries Beneath the Mangroves

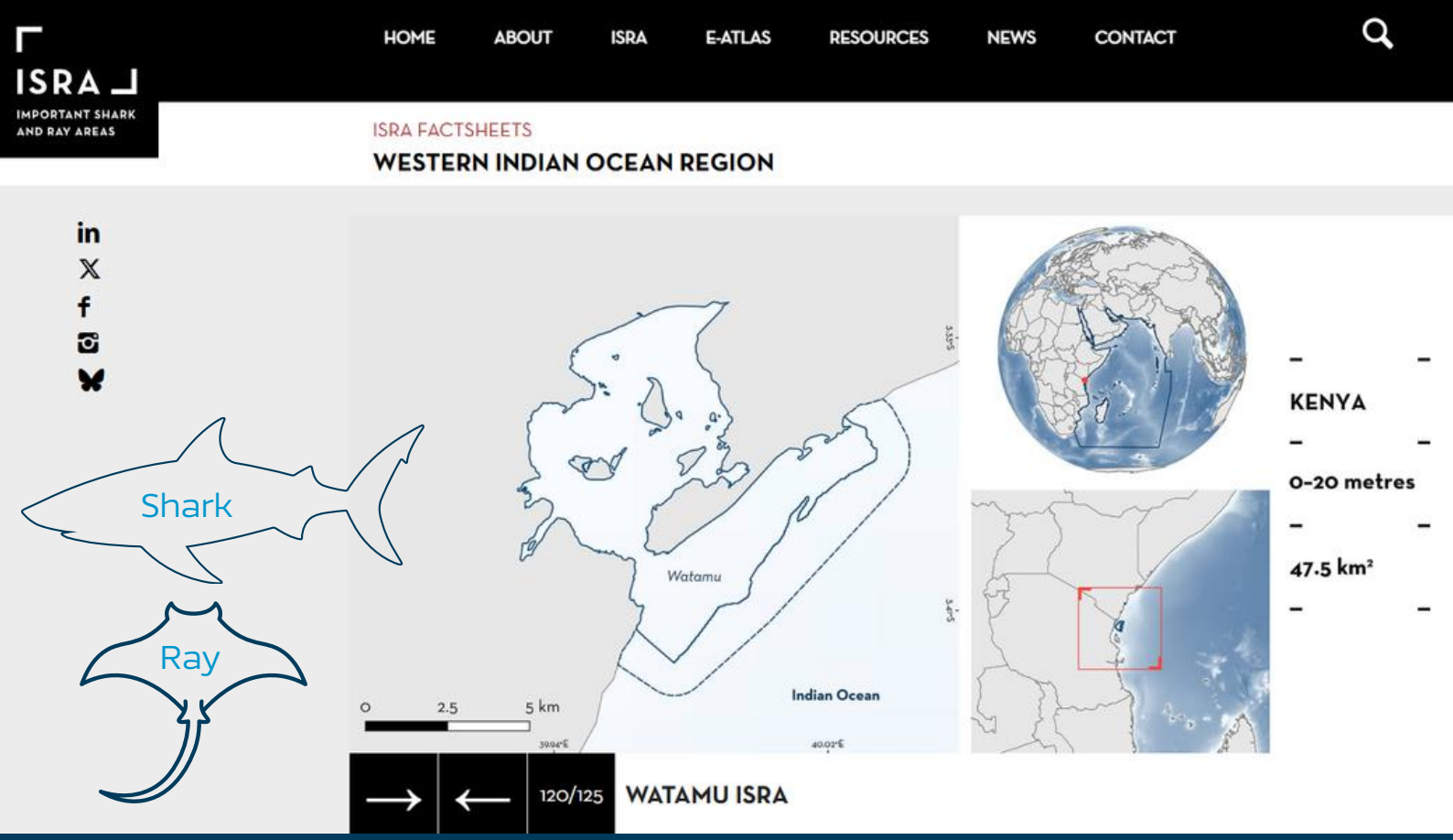
Behind the reefs, our research has extended into the winding channels draining the mangrove forests of Mida Creek.

Since 2020 during COVID, the marine team has been building the first comprehensive dataset on these deeper creek habitats through: taking over 55,000 images of subtidal biodiversity, structured fish counts and habitat mapping.

The aim is to understand how these channels function within the wider coastal ecosystem, particularly their role as fish nurseries.

Preliminary data increasingly suggests the channels are critical in this with early analyses showing that nearly 90% of fish recorded in surveyed channels are juveniles. Understanding species composition strengthens the case for the ecological function of the mangrove channels.


Moral eel



Highlight: Recognition of Watamu as an Important Shark and Ray Area (ISRA)

Years of elasmobranch monitoring in Watamu Marine National Park culminated in an important milestone in 2025.

Through sustained SCUBA surveys, BRUVS deployments, and habitat assessments, the team documented key species, including blacktip reef sharks and the Critically Endangered Halavi guitarfish.

This body of evidence contributed to Watamu's official recognition as an Important Shark and Ray Area (ISRA) under the global ISRA initiative led by the IUCN Shark Specialist Group.

ISRAs are scientifically identified areas considered important for the conservation of sharks, rays, and chimaeras, based on criteria such as species vulnerability, reproductive importance, and habitat use.

Inclusion in the global ISRA e-Atlas recognises Watamu as habitat of international importance for threatened elasmobranch species. It strengthens the scientific case for continued protection, informed management, and long-term monitoring.

What began as a local monitoring effort has contributed to a globally recognised conservation designation, illustrating how sustained, methodical research can help shape marine conservation outcomes.

Community Conservation

While research helps us understand ecosystems and guide conservation decisions, long-term conservation outcomes ultimately depend on the people who live alongside, use, and care for these landscapes and seascapes.

The Arabuko–Sokoke Schools and Eco–Tourism Scheme (ASSETS)

ASSETS is a long–running conservation education and scholarship programme linking community wellbeing with the conservation of Arabuko–Sokoke Forest and Mida Creek.

Established in the early 2000s, the programme supports secondary school education for students from communities surrounding the forest while encouraging sustained engagement with conservation among students and their families.

One highlight of the year was the three ASSETS camps held during school holidays, bringing together over 100 students from 59 partner secondary schools supported through the programme. These camps combined conservation education, mentorship, personal development, and a lot of fun!

Students participated in activities including games, butterfly catching, tree planting, invasive species management, bird ringing and discussions on ecosystem stewardship.

By the end of the camps, 80% of participating students reported a stronger commitment to conserving their local environment, while conservation clubs in participating schools showed renewed activity and initiative.

Engagement extended beyond students. In 2025, through Muvera wa ASSETS – a parent–led initiative supporting conservation activities within the programme, nurtured over 22,000 seedlings in community tree nurseries, which were later planted in degraded areas adjacent to Arabuko–Sokoke Forest.

Changes in operations

The programme has been navigating changes in Kenya's education system. The country has transitioned from the 8-4 system to the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC).

Because ASSETS historically identifies promising students from primary schools neighbouring the forest and supports them through secondary education, the shift required the programme to reassess how students are identified and supported.

Feature Story: The Sokoke Forest MTB Challenge

The Sokoke Forest MTB Challenge has grown into one of Kenya's best-known off-road cycling events. Held annually, the race raises funds to support the ASSETS programme.

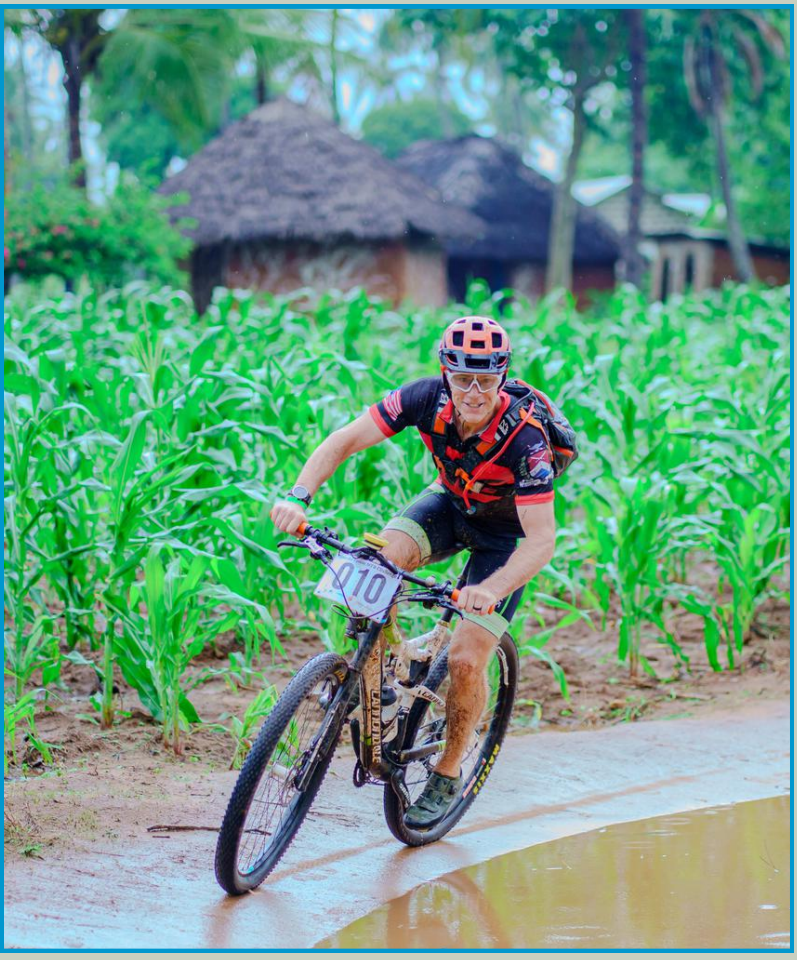
In its seventh edition in 2025, riders travelled from across the country to take part. Some came for the competition, others for the challenge, the coastal heat, or simply the experience of riding through Arabuko-Sokoke Forest.

The 2025 race unfolded under unusually wet conditions. Rain in the days leading up to the event, and torrential rain on the morning of the race, transformed the course.

Instead of the deep sand riders typically expect, participants faced deep puddles, slippery slopes, and muddy winding tracks. Despite these conditions, the event proved highly successful.

The race generated a net balance of KES 1.4 million for ASSETS, the highest amount raised since the challenge began.

This success was made possible through the support of sponsors including Lordship Africa and Mombasa Cement, the riders who took part, and long-standing partners such as Turtle Bay Beach Club. The event also relied on more than 60 volunteer marshals, many of whom stood in heavy rain for hours to guide riders safely along the route.

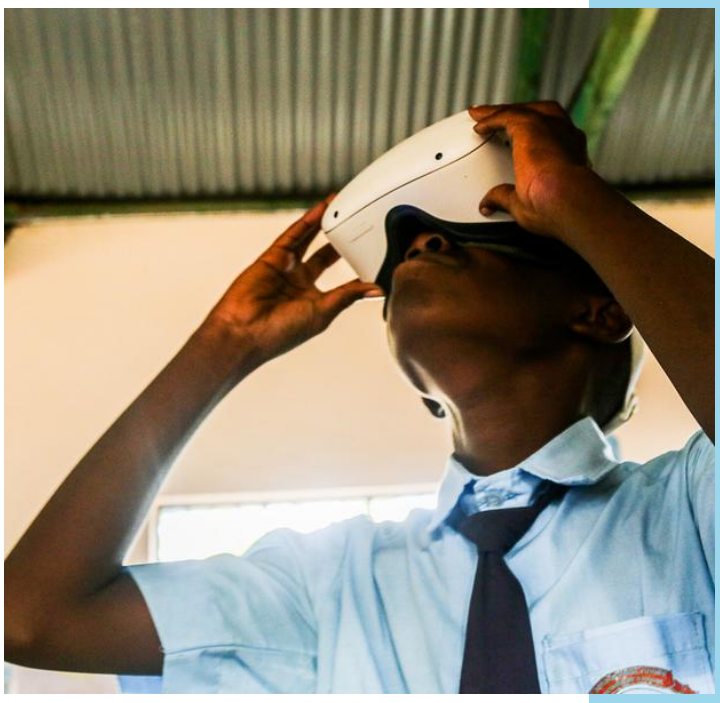


Environmental Education

In 2025, A Rocha Kenya's Environmental Education programme continued to engage schools and communities across Dakatcha Woodland, Watamu Marine Park, Arabuko–Sokoke Forest, and Mida Creek.

Supported by partners including the Leventis Project, Franklinia Foundation, and Common Rule Church (Australia), the programme reached thousands of learners through classroom sessions, field activities, and community engagement.

While each area presents different ecological stories, the aim remains the same: helping young people understand the environment around them and encouraging them to care for it.



Marine Education

Marine Environmental Education focused on introducing students from seven schools around Watamu Marine Park and Reserve to the ecology of coral reefs.

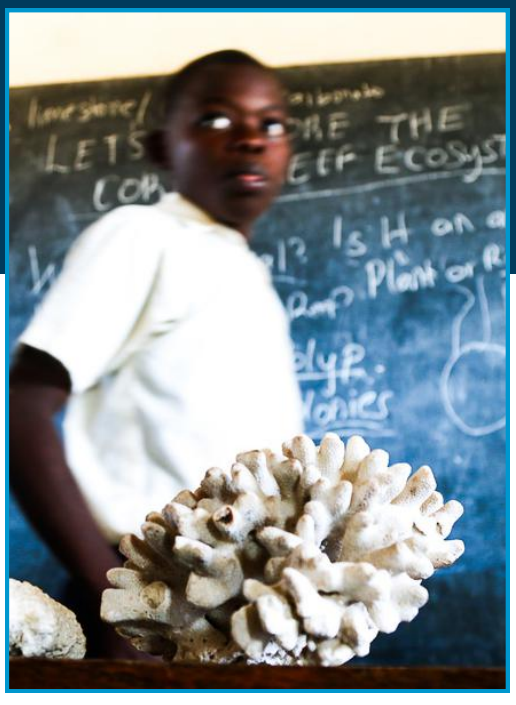
Through a combination of classroom lessons and practical learning experiences, students explored the biodiversity and ecological importance of reef ecosystems.

Across the year, 28 environmental education sessions were conducted, reaching more than 1,000 students. For many learners, these sessions included surprising discoveries, including the realisation that corals are living organisms rather than colourful rocks.

The programme concluded with an Ocean Ecosystem Festival, where students shared what they had learned through posters, sand sculptures, songs, and short skits. The event provided an opportunity for creativity while reinforcing learning about marine ecosystems.

1000+

Students engaged



Arabuko-Sokoke Forest Education

800+

Students across 13 schools engaged

Environmental education activities were also revitalised within the ASSETS school network, expanding engagement with students and conservation clubs around Arabuko-Sokoke Forest and Mida Creek.

Learning focused on practical and field-based activities that help students understand ecosystems through direct experience.

Students participated in a range of activities including establishing pollinator gardens, tree identification and classification exercises, bird-ringing demonstrations, and tree exploration and leaf investigation activities.

These experiences encouraged observation, curiosity, and a deeper understanding of biodiversity and environmental challenges affecting the forest ecosystem.

Dakatcha Education

School visits were conducted in seven schools surrounding Dakatcha Woodland, focusing on awareness of the forest ecosystem and the importance of conserving its biodiversity.

Alongside school engagement, three community meetings were held to document local Giriama knowledge of indigenous trees.

These conversations explored traditional uses, cultural value, and community perspectives on the woodland.

The response highlighted the importance of communicating in people's mother tongue when exploring cultural and ecological knowledge. The information gathered will contribute to future teaching materials designed to pass this knowledge to younger generations and strengthen appreciation of indigenous tree species.

Feature Story: Transforming a School Environment

When environmental education engagement began at Nyari Comprehensive School, the wildlife club was largely inactive. Membership was low, many learners were hesitant to speak, and language barriers limited participation. Large areas of the school compound were bare, creating dusty conditions and offering few opportunities for environmental activities.

To address this, education sessions were designed to be inclusive and participatory, using Swahili as the primary language while allowing learners to contribute in Giriama with support from the club patron.

This approach helped students participate more confidently and connect conservation topics to their own experiences.

Over time, changes became evident. Students increasingly contributed ideas, answered questions, and took initiative. Membership in the club grew as learners from across the school became involved.

Inspired by these activities, club members began improving the school grounds. They planted grasses and flowers in previously bare areas, used plants to define walkways, and helped improve the appearance of the compound. The school administration supported these efforts and encouraged wider participation.

The club also established a tree nursery, planted fruit and indigenous trees, and created vegetable and kitchen gardens, including sack gardens producing kales for school use.

These activities strengthened practical skills, teamwork, and responsibility. By the end of the year, the wildlife club had become the most active club in the school, providing a tangible example of how environmental education can influence both student participation and the school environment.

Assassin Bug - Photographed at Mwamba

Conservation Centres

Mwamba Centre

At Mwamba, the focus is on creating spaces where people can connect; with nature and with one another.

Shared meals, volunteer projects, and everyday interactions form part of a rhythm that nurtures both community and a deeper appreciation for conservation.

As the home of much of A Rocha Kenya's research, environmental education, volunteer engagement, and community outreach work, Mwamba continues to serve as a place where learning, reflection, and practical action come together.

Dear A Rocha staff,

Thank you so much for a wonderful stay! We're so grateful for your warm hospitality, generous welcome, amazing activities, incredible knowledge, and desire to care for God's creation. We pray for God's richest blessings over you as you work here.

Rift Valley Academy

Our numbers in 2025

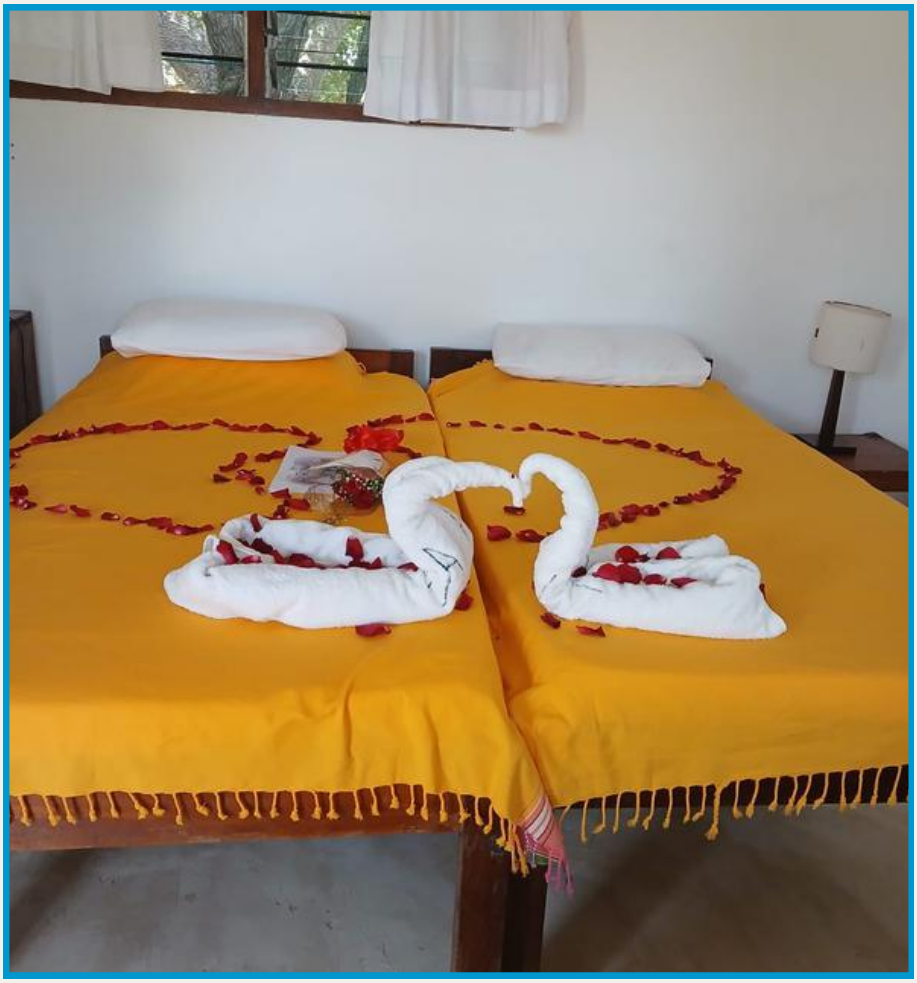
1400+

Guests received at Mwamba

40+

Volunteers across our programmes


The Earth is The




GIFT
SHOP

People Behind the Work

Volunteers remain an important part of life at Mwamba, contributing their time, skills, and energy to the work of the centre.

In 2025, we welcomed more than 40 volunteers from Kenya and around the world, each bringing different skills and experiences.

Among them were Sam and Debra from Switzerland, who spent two months contributing to a wide range of projects around Mwamba. Their work ranged from practical construction and painting to establishing a "Keep Plastics Off the Beach" initiative, while also improving shared spaces through thoughtful additions such as a beautifully crafted mug rack in the dining room.

Jonah from Australia also contributed in many ways, including painting murals in the new research office, building a cajón drum from scratch for worship, and assisting with a variety of day-to-day activities around the centre.

Manu and Hannah, also from Switzerland, brought considerable expertise in data management and analysis. Their contributions included organising 360,000 bird-ringing records into a format suitable for analysis and supporting detailed GIS work for mapping benthic habitats in Mida Creek.

Many others also played important roles throughout the year, including Josh (South Africa), Wisse (Netherlands), and Laureen (Kenya) supporting bird research; Rory and Sunny (Scotland), Lara and Vera (Kenya), and Sam (UK) assisting with general work; and Leo (Germany), Iris (USA), and Jaro (Kenya) supporting marine research.

> *People remain one of A Rocha Kenya's greatest strengths, bringing diverse skills, perspectives, and experiences that help advance our mission.*

New Faces
Stronger Foundations

The year also brought several additions to the staff team, strengthening the systems and capacity that support A Rocha Kenya's programmes.

Njoki joined as Finance Manager and Chebet as Human Resources Officer, helping strengthen the operational foundations that enable the organisation's work to run effectively.

We were also delighted to welcome Cassandra, who joined to support fundraising and communications, and Fanaka, who brought valuable expertise in data management and analysis.

Njoki
Finance Manager

Fanaka
Data Management & Analytics

Cassandra
Fundraising Officer

Chebet
Human Resources Officer

Challenges and Lessons Learned.

As A Rocha Kenya has grown, there have inevitably been growing pains, and during 2025 a number of these came into sharper focus. Some have been a direct function of that growth, such as the need for improved and more effective financial and administrative systems. Others have arisen from the increasing scale and complexity of our conservation work, including becoming custodians of more than 9,500 acres of threatened forest.

We continue to be encouraged and grateful for how partners and individuals alike have joined us at critical junctures, enabling us to navigate challenges, find solutions, and grow stronger as an organisation. Working to our strengths and drawing on the strengths of others has been a rewarding and exciting journey.

Not that all challenges have been met by a long way! The livestock incursions remain an intense issue for the future with no clear solution.

Navigating increasingly complex government regulations for non-profits brings its own challenges, and the age-old task of securing sufficient funding to allow us to do what we feel called to do never seems to go away.

At the same time, the year reinforced some important lessons. Conservation is rarely achieved alone. Again and again, we have seen the value of collaboration, humility, perseverance, and a willingness to learn from others. We have also been reminded that meaningful conservation outcomes are often the result of steady effort over many years rather than quick solutions.

As we come into 2026 and all that it promises, we are grateful to work alongside such a diverse and committed group of partners and supporters, from government institutions such as Kenya Wildlife Service and Kenya Forest Service, to hotels and businesses, fellow conservation organisations, community groups, volunteers, churches, and individual supporters. Thank you.

Financial Overview

The figures below are preliminary management accounts for 2025 and remain subject to change upon completion of the annual audit.

In 2025, A Rocha Kenya recorded total income of **Ksh 144,013,108**, supporting conservation work across Kenya's coastal and terrestrial landscapes.

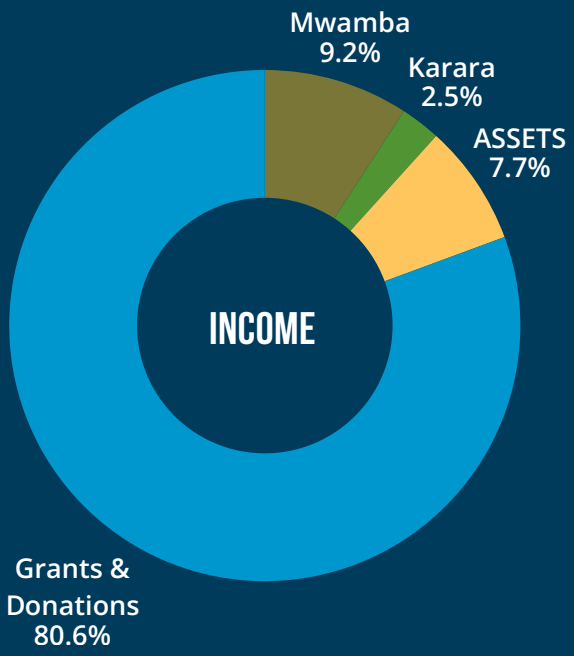
The majority of this income, **Ksh 116,117,396**, came through grants and donations, reflecting the continued trust and commitment of individuals, churches, foundations, institutions, and partners who share our vision of caring for nature and people.

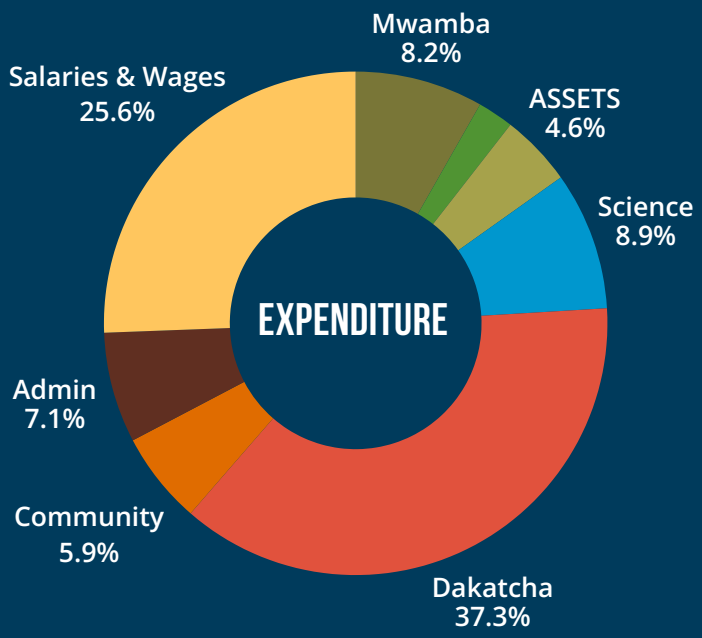
Additional income was generated through A Rocha Kenya's centres and programmes, including **Ksh 13,189,034** from Mwamba, **Ksh 3,658,496** from Karara, and **Ksh 11,048,180** through the ASSETS Programme. These contributions help sustain our operational hubs while supporting conservation, community engagement, environmental education, and research activities.

Total expenditure for the year was **Ksh 111,147,282**, with significant investments directed towards landscape conservation in Dakatcha, scientific research, community programmes, staff costs, and organisational operations. These expenditures enabled continued work in habitat restoration, species monitoring, community conservation initiatives, environmental education, and the protection of key biodiversity areas.

As always, unrestricted funding remains particularly valuable. Flexible support enables A Rocha Kenya to respond to emerging conservation challenges, strengthen organisational resilience, invest in essential infrastructure and systems, and provide the operational foundation upon which all project activities depend.

We are deeply grateful to every donor, partner, volunteer, and supporter whose generosity makes this work possible.





How You Can Support

The work highlighted in this report is made possible through the commitment of supporters, partners, volunteers, and communities working together for nature. There are several ways to support A Rocha Kenya's conservation work:

Donate

Financial contributions help sustain conservation programmes, scientific research, environmental education, and community engagement initiatives across Kenya.

Partner With Us

We welcome partnerships with organisations, institutions, and businesses that share our commitment to conserving biodiversity and supporting sustainable livelihoods.

Volunteer

Volunteers support a range of activities, from environmental education and habitat restoration to species monitoring and community outreach.

Spread the Word

Following, sharing, and engaging with our work helps raise awareness of Kenya's unique biodiversity and the conservation challenges and opportunities facing it.

To learn more or get involved, visit our website or contact the team directly.

communications.kenya@arocha.org

www.arocha.or.ke

The work of A Rocha Kenya directly or indirectly contributes towards the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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KENYA

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