

## **Project Update: June 2011**

### **Sea turtle conservation**

The participation of fishermen in sea turtle conservation is yielding more results by ensuring that turtles are protected both in and out of water. Awareness meetings carried have enabled the election of point men at every landing site. These point men are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that all fishermen at each landing site are actively involved in turtle protection and the marine environment. The point men have been recording information ranging from sea turtle sightings when fishing, dead turtles, nesting turtles and bycatch. Every landing site has been provided with a recording book for all activities and information related to marine. In every landing site, beach patrols have been intensified where two fishermen each day do patrolling. Awareness meetings have been going on with full attendance even by those fishermen who were resistant at the beginning of the project. During these meetings, participants have been very active by asking questions to gather more knowledge and also share their local knowledge/experience about sea turtles.

Due to this awareness and cooperation from fishermen, cases of turtle killings and nest excavation have gone down as every fisherman is now a security man and looks at who will be engaged in destructive behaviour. Collaboration from KWS and Fisheries is high and the local community has come to learn that even the government participates in implementation of this project.

Though the ocean has been very rough since May, four green turtles has been released back to the sea. One of the turtles was taken to Watamu Turtle Watch rehabilitation centre by KWS rangers. The turtle is now under medication and will be released soonest after recovery.

Following the full participation of the fishermen in every landing site, the point men have been told to select five people from every landing site who will be trained in sea turtle handling, nest translocation etc.

### **Education and awareness**

The project staff together with university interns have visited 10 schools and involved children in both class work and practical work. Children were engaged in art work, mangrove planting and video shows. Teacher's participation in awareness activities has been very great which shows the willingness to continue with the activities even on days that the project can't reach.

Awareness has also been created through the production and distribution of calendars. A total of 1000 calendars were produced and distributed to teachers, school children, fishermen, local community, KWS staff, KFS staff and visitors to the project. Every school received calendars that were put in offices, classrooms and notice boards. Also for every public vehicle that still had our project sticker, the driver and the tout received a calendar each.

The project intends to involve children in beach cleaning and also facilitate them to participate in mangrove planting. Students will also be involved in quiz challenges/competition and engaged in poetry and singing with marine environmental themes.

The project also plans to hold a workshop that will be attended by fishermen, teachers, KWS staff, Fisheries staff and KFS staff. This workshop would wish to boost the attendants knowledge of issues regarding the marine environment and spell out how they could help deal with such threats/issues.

## Mangrove Restoration

Two mangrove tree nurseries have been established with a capacity of 5000 seedlings which are currently under the management and monitoring of the local community. Following training that was done in nurseries setup, the community can now manage to setup and monitor tree nurseries till planting time. Meetings that have been conducted have made the local community aware of the importance of mangroves and the need to conserve and protect them. It is now not easy for one to be seen cutting down mangroves as the community have appointed community forest patrolmen who work closely with Kenya Forest Service rangers to protect the forest.

