

Scale up work on poverty reduction and biodiversity policy making pays off in Dakatcha woodlands in Kenya

Title

Birdlife Africa Partnership got a renewed boost to its work in Poverty reduction and policy making when the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development (AECID) gave some additional funding amounting to Euros, 500,000 in October 2010. One of the sites benefiting from this project is Dakatcha Woodlands that are northwest of the town of Malindi on the coast of Kenya.

It has been identified as an 'Important Bird Area' as it is home to a number of globally threatened birds such as the Sokoke Scops Owl, Sokoke Pipit and Clarkes weaver which is only found in two places on earth: Dakatcha woodland and Arabuko- Sokoke Forest. Nature Kenya (BirdLife partner in Kenya) have been implementing this project in Dakatcha, and recently attained some triumph over a proposed Jatropha project by an investor from the west when the National Environment Management Authority in Kenya officially rejected a proposal to convert 10,000 hectares of Dakatcha Woodland IBA to grow the biofuel crop jatropha *Jatropha curcus*. [See previous news](#). Dakatcha woodland communities continue to benefit from livelihoods initiatives supported by this project, through its SSG which has two main umbrella groups encompassing over seven other groups. This initiatives include bee keeping with over 300 beehives having been distributed and Honey processing unit set up and members trained in bee keeping and business skills; woodlot establishment has also been established with the 'casuraina tree species' being grown to meet demand of the communities use of wood thus reducing impact on the surrounding woodlands.

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<http://www.birdlife.org/community/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/jatropha-plantation-300x199.jpg>



Dried up Jatropha plantation in Dakatcha.
Photography by Venancia Wambua

A tourism visitor's site has also been established at the Mekatilili site ready to receive visitors and help conserve the Kaya-Mekatilili forest which is part of the Dakatcha woodlands. Also Dakatcha Community Forest Association (CFA) has formally registered with Registrar of societies earning recognition to engage with Kenya Forest Service in Management of the woodland and Community Forest Guides being trained and uniforms distributed to boost their forest protection work. The Local communities have also formed a Charcoal Producers Association (CPA) which will be engaged in sustainable production of charcoal and register all charcoal producers in the woodland, thus this initiative will greatly reduce the 'negative effects of charcoal production' in the area. BirdLife and its Partners across Africa are very grateful for the support from AECID and are tirelessly working towards achieving the goals of this project.



By Venancia Wambua