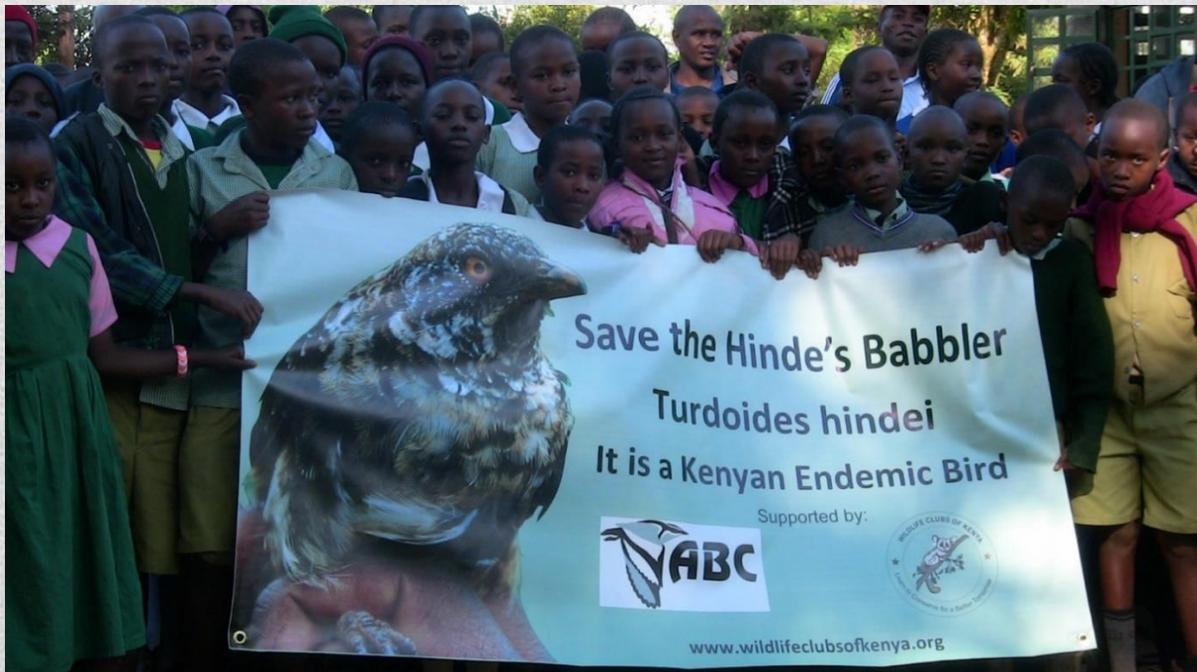


HINDE'S BABBLER CONSERVATION MONTH PROJECT REPORT

By
Gabriel Ngale
Mobile Education Officer
Wildlife Clubs of Kenya
wildlifeclubs@yahoo.com
gabrielngale@wildlifeclubsofkenya.org

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1.0 Summary

The aim of the Hinde's Babbler Conservation Month Project was to foster conservation of globally vulnerable and Kenyan endemic Hinde's Babbler *Turdoides hindei* in the Mukurweini Valleys IBA. The project was implemented in the month of September and October 2015. A total of 8,465 school children and 153 teachers from 56 schools located in the Mukurweini Valleys IBA and environs were reached by the project. Through thematic talks, discussions, and screening of conservation films the school children and teachers were educated on the status, ecology, threats and measures to conserve the Hinde's Babbler. The schools reached were guided and enrolled as wildlife clubs forming a grassroots network that would be involved in undertaking conservation activities in the IBA. The project also organized a Hinde's Babbler Awareness Day that brought together pupils and teachers from 10 schools located in the Mukurweini Valleys IBA; activities undertaken during the awareness day include lectures about *T. hindei*, quiz competition, guided nature walks and habitat restoration through tree planting. Also 46 primary school head teachers were sensitized about the *T. hindei*. Through this ABC Hinde's Babbler project various conservation education materials were produced and distributed to schools and other stakeholders in the Mukurweini Valleys IBA. This enabled teachers and students access information useful for Hinde's Babbler conservation. The materials include 200 copies of Hinde's Babbler conservation posters, a banner and 100 copies of film documentary.

2.0 Project Location and the Hinde's Babbler

The project location was at the Mukurweini Valley IBA located on the Southern slopes of Mt Kenya (0° 42'S, 36° 34' E), and it covers an area of at least 20,000 ha. The area includes the catchments of the Thiha and Sagana Rivers on either side of the Thangathi- Kanunga road near Mukurweini town. It lies at an altitude of 1,500-1,600m. (Bennun and Njoroge, 1999). Mukurweini Valleys are the stronghold of the Hinde's Babbler population, hosting about half of the population (Shaw and Musina, 2003). The IUCN Red List criteria classifies Hinde's Babbler *Turdoides hindei* as "globally vulnerable" (Birdlife International 2012). It is confined to the valleys, with group territories centred on patches of the exotic shrub *Lantana*, which the babblers depend on for shelter and nest sites. This bird is a cooperative breeder, found mostly in small family groups (Njoroge et al. 1998; Shaw and Musina 2003). Fast transformation of pristine vegetation into agricultural land caused decreasing abundance of this species during the past 10 years (Njoroge and Bennun 2000; Zimmerman et al. 2005; BirdLife International 2012), with an approximate loss of more than 60 % of its original distribution (Shaw et al. 2013).

3.0 The Project Purpose

The main goal of the project was to foster conservation of the globally vulnerable and Kenyan endemic Hinde's Babbler *Turdoides hindei* in the Mukurweini Valleys IBA. Specific project objectives were:

- i. To educate school students from 50 different schools in Mukurweini Valleys IBA on the *T. hindei* status, ecology and threats facing the bird specie.
- ii. To organize a Hinde's Babbler awareness event for schools and community in the Mukurweini Valleys IBA.
- iii. To produce conservation education materials to be used for Hinde's Babbler conservation.

4.0 Abbreviations

- ABC African Bird Club
- IBA Important Bird Area
- MEU Mobile Education Unit
- SSG Site Support Group
- WCK Wildlife Clubs of Kenya



Habitat fragmentation in Mukurwe-ini Valleys IBA is a threat to *T. hindei*

5.0 Partners and Stakeholders Involved

The project was funded by the African Bird Club and implemented by the Wildlife Clubs of Kenya's Mobile Education Unit. Some of the partners and stakeholders who made the project a success are:

- i. Dr Ronald K. Mulwa from the Ornithological Department of National Museums of Kenya and Dr Jan Christian Habel of Department of Ecology and Ecosystem Management, Technische Universita't Mu'nchen, Germany. They shared Hinde's Babbler research documents, image and recorded calls of Hinde's Babbler. These items were instrumental in running the *T. hindei* outreach education program and development of conservation education materials
- ii. Mukurwe-ini Valleys IBA Nature Kenya Site Support Group (SSG) led by the chairman who is also the manager at Wajee Nature Park, Charles Kariuki. He made it possible for the project to engage the SSG and permitted schools to access and use the Wajee Nature Park.
- iii. Local schools and communities in the Mukurwe-ini Valleys IBA who now remain as the transformed Hinde's Babbler conservation warriors and members of WCK.



Pupils in a guided nature walk at the Bird Sanctuary during the Hinde's Babbler Conservation Event

6.0 Project Results/Outputs

6.10 Head Teachers Sensitization.

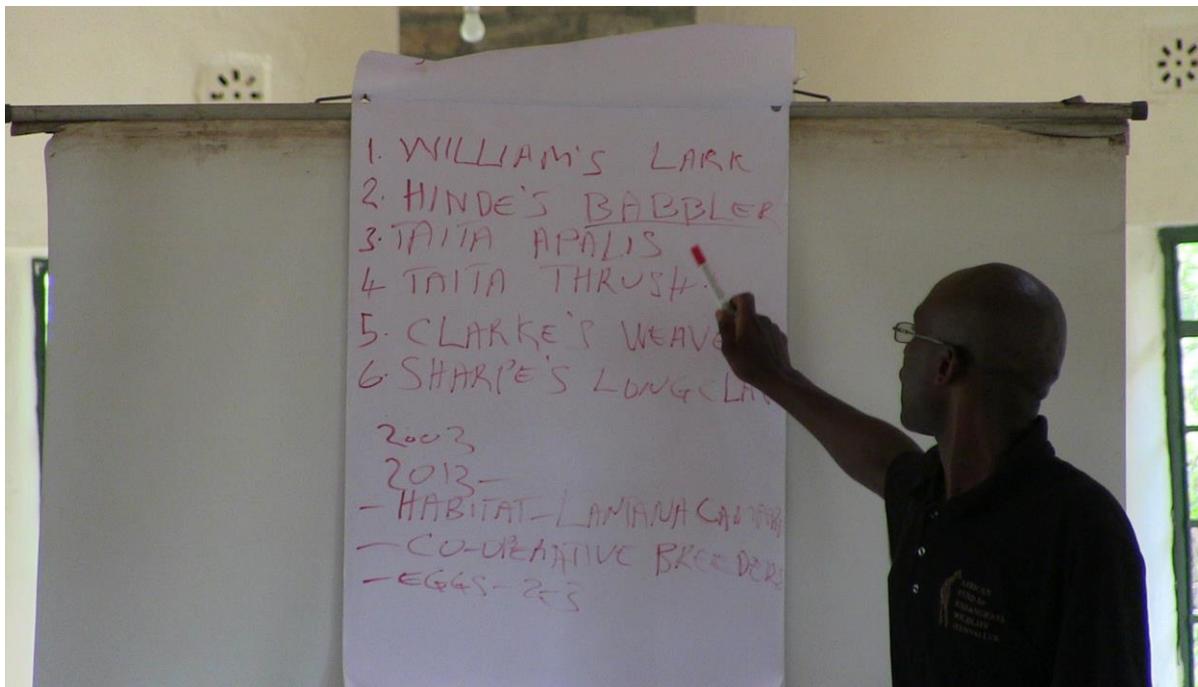
A Total of 46 head teachers from different primary schools in the Mukurweini Valleys IBA and environs were sensitized about the Hinde's Babbler and how their respective schools can take a leading role in conservation efforts. The training targeted head teachers because they are in charge of the schools and make important management decisions in the institutions. *T. hindei* conservation posters and other conservation publications were distributed to the head teachers.



Head teachers during the *T. hindei* sensitization workshop

6.20 Outreach Education Program to Schools

A total of 8,465 school children and 153 teachers from 56 schools in the Mukurweini Valleys IBA and surrounding environs were reached by the Mobile Education Unit (MEU) Program of the Wildlife Clubs of Kenya. The MEU is equipped with a vehicle, power generator, audio-visual equipment and education materials. During the visits school children and teachers were educated on thematic local conservation issues and ways of conserving the Kenyan endemic Hinde's Babbler. Some of the areas covered include Identification, Status and Ecology of *T. hindei*, Threats and Ways of Conserving *T. hindei* in the Mukurwe-ini Valleys IBA, Wildlife and Environmental Conservation in Kenya, Water Catchment Conservation, Adapting to Climate Change and Effects, Living with Wildlife, How to have a Successful Wildlife Club, How to initiative Sustainable Conservation Activities. The topics were reinforced through screening of relevant conservation films. A total of 200 babbler conservation posters, 100 films and 150 copies of WCK *Komba* magazine were distributed to schools visited.



Outreach Conservation Education Programs to Schools in Mukurwe-ini Valleys IBA

6.30 Hinde's Babbler Awareness Day

The Hinde's Babbler Awareness Day was held on the 24th of October 2015. A total of ten schools from the Mukurweini Valleys IBA converged at the Wajee Nature Park to mark the Hinde's Babbler Awareness Day. The event was addressed by African Wildlife Foundation Official-Nanyuki Office, WCK Education Officers, Nature Kenya Mukurwe-ini Valleys IBA Site Support Group and Manager of Wajee Nature Park and Bird Sanctuary. The conservation activities that were undertaken during this event include:

6.31 *T. hindei* Conservation Lectures

Schools were given lectures about the Hinde's Babbler; how to identify the bird, its preferred habitats, general ecology of the bird, current challenges facing the existence of the Hinde's Babbler and possible ways of combating the threats. Other methods used during the lectures were playing and identifying of Hinde's Babbler call and screening of wildlife films.



6.32 Hinde's Babbler Quiz Competition

All 10 participating schools were engaged in a *T. hindei* quiz competition. The purpose of the quiz was to gauge levels of understanding, encourage information sharing among participants and challenge both pupils and teachers to consider and implement appropriate approaches in conservation of the Hinde's Babbler. The winning school (Karaguririo Primary School) received a trophy. Each of the participating schools and teachers were also given a certificate of participation and education materials.



Presenting Awards to participating schools and teachers

6.33 Nature Walk and Habitat Restoration

School children and teachers were guided in the Wajee Nature Park Trail which is also a Bird Sanctuary located in the Mukurweini Valleys IBA. The participants took part in reforestation activity through planting of local appropriate indigenous tree seedlings in the park. The exercise was meant to inculcate conservation interest and environmental stewardship among the school youth.



Schools in a nature walk and planting of indigenous trees at Wajee Nature Park & Bird Sanctuary

6.4 Production and Distribution of Education Materials

Various thematic educational materials were produced and distributed to schools and key stakeholders in the Mukurweini Valleys IBA. The purpose was to ensure schools and community members can access information and tools that can be used to enhance Hinde's Babbler conservation. The following materials were produced and distributed by the one month ABC funded project.

- a. A total of 200 copies of Hinde's Babbler posters
- b. A Hinde's Babbler banner that was used for awareness and publicity
- c. Conservation documentary-100 copies produced
- d. Recording and use of Hinde's Babbler call

**SAVE THE HINDES BABBLER BIRD
IN NYERI COUNTY**

About Hinde's Babbler
(*Turdoides hindei*)

- It is a globally vulnerable restricted range, Kenyan endemic bird.
- Endemic means it is found in a specific geographical area.
- In Kenya Hinde's babbler is found in Mukurweini valley in Nyeri County and a few other areas.



How to save Hinde's Babbler

- Join and support Wildlife Clubs of Kenya's Hinde's Babbler Run event held annually at Mukurweini Valley BA, Nyeri County.
- Create awareness about hinde's babbler in the community.
- Help to protect hinde's babbler remaining habitats.
- Form wildlife clubs in schools to foster wildlife and environmental conservation.

Supported by:



Mukurweini valley (Important Bird Area-IBA) harbors this endemic bird specie which provides an enormous untapped touristic and ecological potential to the Nyeri County and Kenya as a Country

www.wildlifeclubsofkenya.org,
P.O. Box 20184 00200 Nairobi.

Learn to Conserve for a Better Tomorrow



Save the Hinde's Babbler
Turdoides hindei
It is a Kenyan Endemic Bird

Supported by:



www.wildlifeclubsofkenya.org



T. hindei posters and banner produced

6.5 Establishing a Network of Wildlife Clubs

The outreach conservation education program in schools managed to build knowledge, understanding, skills and interest that motivated hundreds of school children and teachers to take part in nature conservation. Therefore these students and teachers were guided to form wildlife clubs in their respective schools. The wildlife clubs in the schools became the official platforms for members to undertake conservation work in their schools and surrounding habitats. The school wildlife clubs were registered by the Wildlife Clubs of Kenya Secretariat enabling them to enjoy some membership benefits and get a good forum to participate in nature conservation. Some of the benefits the clubs enjoy include receiving three issues of a school youth conservation magazine called *Komba*, entering Kenya's national parks at a reduced rate thanks to Kenya Wildlife Service, free visits by WCK Mobile Education Units, a chance to participate in conservation events and activities, using WCK hostels and facilities during outdoor trips amongst other benefits. The project managed to initiate a total of 56 school wildlife clubs in the Mukurweini Valleys IBA. This is important for the project sustainability as the clubs remain a key conservation entry point to the schools and communities.



Initiating a network of wildlife clubs in schools at the Mukurwe-ini Valleys IBA

7.0 How the Project Benefited Conservation

In summary the project benefited conservation in the following ways:

7.1 Community/School Education and Awareness

The project educated and involved the community and schools in nature conservation especially the conservation of *T. hindei* in the Mukurweini Valleys IBA. A total of 8,465 students and 153 teachers from 56 schools were reached. Using various approaches participants were trained and sensitized on identification, ecology, threats and ways of conserving the endemic bird. By making community members understand the plight of Hinde's Babbler then local threats facing this bird will also be addressed in a better way.

7.2 Establishment of a School Conservation Network.

The 56 school wildlife clubs established form a ready grass-root conservation network. The formation of the school wildlife clubs network is key to the project sustainability. This network is associated to the Wildlife Clubs of Kenya and will be used by other conservation organizations or conservationist who plan to undertake any conservation work in the Mukurweini Valleys IBA.

7.3 Production and Distribution of Education Materials

Previously schools and community members did not have access to education materials about *T. hindei*. This inhibited their comprehensive understanding of the status, ecology as well as threats facing the Hinde's Babbler. The ABC funded project addressed this limitation by producing and distributing *T. hindei* education materials in form of posters, banners, films and *T. hindei* calls that were distributed to schools and relevant stakeholders in the Mukurweini Valleys IBA and environs.

8.0 How the Project Results were Disseminated

1. Produced education materials were distributed to relevant stakeholders within the Mukurweini Valleys IBA at a free cost. The materials include 200 copies of Hinde's Babbler posters, a banner, recorded calls and 100 copies of film documentary. They were distributed to the 56 schools reached by the outreach Mobile Education Unit, the 46 head teachers during the sensitization meeting, the 10 schools that attended the Hinde's Babbler Awareness ay, the Nature Kenya-Mukurwe-ini Valleys IBA Site Support Group, Wajee Nature Park and Bird Sanctuary as well as local leaders.
2. Publishing the results in Wildlife Clubs of Kenya Media; the project activities were shared in WCK social media platform. An article about the project results was published in the WCK youthful conservation magazine called *Komba*. WCK produces three issues of *Komba* magazine every year which are sent to thousands of member schools in Kenya.
3. The results will continue to be shared in conservation forums and meetings through the Wildlife Clubs of Kenya network and partners countrywide.

9.0 Financial Summary

Expenditure Breakdown

Main Item	Details	Cost in £ UK
Production of Conservation Education Materials	200 Hinde's babbler posters and a banner	200
	Film Documentary-100 copies	350
Outreach Conservation Education Program	Field Vehicle & Equipment running and maintenance expenses	480
	Field accommodation, Meals and Subsistence needs	270
Hinde's Babbler Awareness Day	Meals for school children and teachers from 10 schools	400
	Awards & certificates to participating schools	100
	Transport and Preparations logistics	200
Total		£ 2000

Exchange/Conversion rate used is 1 £= Kenya Shillings 100.

10.0 Conclusion

The Hinde's Babbler *Turdoides hindei* Conservation Month Project made a meaningful impact thanks to the ABC financial support. It was noted during the project implementation that the school children and teachers from the Mukurwe-ini Valley IBA were not aware of the existence of *T. hindei*. They could not identify the bird by sight or call. This one month ABC funded project addressed this problem by doing intensive and extensive education programs about the Hinde's Babbler. The major challenge facing the *T. hindei* emanates from local communities land use activities that has led to Hinde's Babbler habitat fragmentation within the IBA, hence the need to fully educate and involve the communities in conservation of this Kenyan endemic bird. However there is need for more of such education and action oriented initiatives in Mukurwe-ini Valleys and other IBA's in Kenya. Existing research findings on bird conservation should be integrated with programs like the WCK MEU to effectively educate and incorporate local communities and schools in species conservation in a sustainable way.

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