



MONTHLY REPORT March 2021

Key achievements

1. Held the annual general meeting on Saturday 20 March 2021.
2. Arranged a six day learning visit for members of the three community forest associations, Kenya Forest Service to Ngare Ndare Forest Trust, Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, Kalama Conservancy, and Friends of Karura Forest.
3. Fifteen farmers from the community bordering the forest were trained in beekeeping as a livelihood project.
4. Delivered 76m³ of coral stones and 100m³ of murram for repairing the forest roads.

Law enforcement

The Friends of Arabuko-Sokoke Forest in collaboration with the Kenya Forest Service, Kenya Wildlife Service, and the community bordering the forest is implementing a forest protection programme that is focused on deterring illegal exploitation of the forest whilst offering the alternative livelihoods to the community and educating them on conservation.

In March, we achieved the following:

- Seven suspects arrested for illegal activities in the forest from seven incidents
- 132 patrol days were executed, with 958 km covered on foot
- 275 snares and traps removed
- One carving camp destroyed
- 244 poles confiscated
- 387 stems cutting recorded
- 24 logs confiscated
- Five charcoal kilns destroyed and eight bags of charcoal confiscated

Infrastructure

Every year, we support Kenya Wildlife Service in maintaining the Arabuko-Sokoke forest big game-proof electric fence. In March we finalised an order of 442 high-pressure treated fencing posts which will be delivered in April. The electric fence around the forest has helped reduce human-elephant conflict and we are committed to ensuring its continued functionality.

Additionally, we delivered 76m³ of coral stones and 100m³ of murram to use in filling eroded parts of forest roads so as improve accessibility of the forest for patrols and ecotourism.

Community livelihoods

We are implementing a beekeeping project for the community bordering the forest, as a source of future income. With 60 locally constructed Langstroth beehives we identified 15 farmers who will benefit from the project. The farmers were trained by a local beekeeping trainer and will receive the beehives and other assorted equipment in April.



Farmers from the community bordering the forest taking in beehives inspection training.

Community forest associations

In March, we sponsored a six day capacity building visit for the 11 new community forest association leaders, the chairman of Arabuko-Sokoke Forest Adjacent Dwellers Association (ASFADA), the Kenya Forest Service ecosystem conservator and Sokoke forest station manager to Ngare-Ndare forest, Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, Kalama Conservancy, and Friends of Karura Forest. The objective of the visit was to expose the Arabuko-Sokoke Forest community leaders to functional community organisations who participate in the management of protected areas. The visit was positively received by all the participants and brought to the table many subjects that are not discussed by the Arabuko-Sokoke forest stakeholders in the past or had caused disagreements. We believe, that bringing all stakeholders together and opening honest discussion about difficult subjects is the only way to move community participation in Arabuko-Sokoke forest management forward, with successful outcome.



Arabuko-Sokoke Forest community forest association leaders and Kenya Forest Service Kilifi County conservator having a chat with Prof. Karanja of Friends of Karura Forest at Karura Forest, Nairobi.

We also held meetings with the new community forest association leaders to discuss a proposal to support them in following up their registration status as required by law. For several years, these associations did not comply with the statutory requirements of an active association. We are now consulting with the different stakeholders, including the Kenya Forest Service to help to resolve the registration process.

Conservation

March marked the end of the dry season and the preparation of fields prior to the rains. Unfortunately, fires associated with early field preparation skipped into the forest in the Arabuko area on two occasions. FoASF together with other stakeholders, were able to stop the fires spreading deep into the forest. Joint action with the community and Kenya Forest Service and Kenya Wildlife Service was successful, but damage to the forest could be devastating in the future. In this regard we will to open a perimeter road and firebreak inside the forest fence line to minimise forest fires in the future.

Administartion and management

After many months of delaying our annual general meeting due to Covid-19 related restrictions, we decided to proceed with the meeting on Saturday 20 March 2021. Although just a few members participated in person, we received much needed support from members in the form of voting at distance or appointing proxies and that allowed us to proceed with important votes for our board of directors as well as adjustments in our constitution.