



LATEST POSTS ABOUT A ROCHA KENYA

Blogroll

- ASSETS blog

Related Links

- A Rocha homepage
- Arabuko-Sokoke Schools & EcoTourism Scheme
- Tana River Delta website

Pages

- About A Rocha Kenya

Recent Posts

- CELEBRATING A HARD-WORKING CONSERVATIONIST-GABRIEL KATANA
- STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF INTERTIDAL ZONES
- THE YEAR 2015, THE HOPE AND PROMISE OF 2016
- NOTE THE RESULTS; THE HARD WORK PUT IN SPITE THE HARDSHIP TO BE ENDURED IS WHAT COUNTS...2016 WATERFOWL COUNTS
- LEARNING AND EXPLORING THE UNIQUE BIODIVERSITY OF ARABUKO SOKOKE FOREST

Recent Comments

- Jimmy on STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF INTERTIDAL ZONES
- Jimmy on LEARNING AND EXPLORING THE UNIQUE BIODIVERSITY OF ARABUKO SOKOKE FOREST
- Jimmy on A FARMER WAKES UP FROM DREAMLAND!
- arochakenya on BIRDING EXPLORATION IN PWANI UNIVERSITY
- Peter Harris on BIRDING EXPLORATION IN PWANI

Tag Archives: Bedford Biofuels

British farming industry, G4 Industries, pulls out of the Tana River Delta

Category: [Tana River Delta](#)
Date: [July 19th 2011](#)
By: [arochakenya](#)

Yes, it's true. Hard to believe in many ways given the feeling of hitting your head against a brick wall when trying to motivate Government to see the long term madness of clear-felling or draining natural wildlife-rich woodland and wetlands to plant 1000s of hectares of crops either for biofuel or for selling to industry in an area where the climate, soils and overall prospect are extremely marginal anyway. Yet it has happened. G4 Industries have pulled out of their plans to put in 28,000ha of oil seed such as castor and sunflower in the southern section of the delta stating reasons as 'technical reasons with regard to soil types and chemical compounds' as well as issues with mismanagement of delta resources by local authorities. They also state that calculations of the long-term effect of climate change on the climate of area has led to the risks being too high for sensible investment.

It is very interesting that they state very clearly that poor soil quality and an uncertain climate as some of the main reasons for pulling out. Reading their Environmental Impact Assessment, they state one of the reasons for going ahead with the project is:

"..to gain the benefits of extremely fertile soil areas and a year round growing climate". (p.5, Annexe A - project feasibility).

Poor soils and a drying climate have been some of the foremost reasons we have been quoting all along as being why *none* of these large-scale developments in the Tana River Delta (or Dakatcha for that matter) should be allowed to go ahead. It is pretty much 99% certain that they will not succeed and we are thanking God that G4 Industries have 'seen the light' and realised the truth of the low quality of farming land and its significance for large scale agriculture.



Aerial view of the heart of the delta - when flooded like this, it is intensely alive with birdlife and fish and other wildlife...

Points go to our partners [NatureKenya](#) and RSPB for their lobbying and on-the-ground effort to show where these ideas of large-scale farming are

FIND A BLOG

Select a region

or

Select a specie

DONATE

Select Kenya from list

Categories

- A Rocha Kenya Staff
- Arabuko-Sokoke Forest
- ARK General
- Biofuels
- Bird Ringing
- Birding & bird counts
- Centre life
- Charcoal
- Christians in conservation
- Communities & conservation
- Conservation Agriculture
- Dakatcha Woodlands
- Eco-tourism
- Endangered species
- Environmental Education
- Forest Regeneration
- Gede Ruins
- How can you help?
- Insects
- Kenya Bird Map
- Marine
- Mida Creek
- Ngulia Ringing Project
- Ringing recoveries
- Sabaki River Delta
- Sea birds
- Spotted Ground Thrush
- summer field course
- Tana River Delta
- Training
- Uncategorized
- Volunteers
- Wetlands

Tags

Amur Falcon Arabuko-Sokoke Arabuko-Sokoke Forest A Rocha A Rocha Kenya ASSETS Bam Swallow Basra Reed Warbler biofuel Biofuels Bird Ringing Clarke's Weaver Clive Minton community Conservation Agriculture Coral corruption Dakatcha David Pearson

Archives

- February 2016
- January 2016
- December 2015
- November 2015
- October 2015
- September 2015
- August 2015
- July 2015
- June 2015
- May 2015
- April 2015
- March 2015
- February 2015
- November 2014
- October 2014
- September 2014
- August 2014
- July 2014
- June 2014
- May 2014
- April 2014
- March 2014
- February 2014
- January 2014
- December 2013
- November 2013
- October 2013
- September 2013
- August 2013
- July 2013
- June 2013
- May 2013
- March 2013
- January 2013
- December 2012
- November 2012
- October 2012
- September 2012
- August 2012
- July 2012
- June 2012
- May 2012
- April 2012
- March 2012
- February 2012
- January 2012
- November 2011
- October 2011
- September 2011
- August 2011
- July 2011
- June 2011
- May 2011
- April 2011
- February 2011
- January 2011
- December 2010
- November 2010
- October 2010
- September 2010
- August 2010
- July 2010
- May 2010
- April 2010
- March 2010
- February 2010
- December 2009
- November 2009
- October 2009
- September 2009
- August 2009

going wrong. Also to the local community members who have stood and shouted that it is wrong what is going on – together with other partners like [Tana Dunes Camp](#) who work closely with the community – and in fact have the community where they are based as partners in the company and therefore benefiting directly from every guest that stays at the lodge.

However we can't rest on our laurels – there are bigger and more serious threats to the delta in the form of Bedford Biofuels still planning to put in 64,000ha of jatropha biofuel and Mumias and Mat International wanting to put in tens of thousands of hectares of sugarcane. But it is encouraging to know that at least a small part of the delta is, for now, safe from immediate destruction. It would be awesome to get in there and do some thorough wildlife studies to see what birds, insects, reptiles, mammals etc really are there – and to put together a plan for turning it into a wilderness zone for tourism – to both provide a sustainable income for the communities that will continue into many years to come whilst at the same time protecting some of Kenya's last remaining wilderness areas with amazing wildlife.



The newly discovered population of rare and endangered Red Colobus – in a small forest patch in the heart of the delta which would be threatened by the sugarcane plantations – image taken in 2010 by Olivier Hamerlynk.

Tags: [A Rocha Kenya](#), [Bedford Biofuels](#), [Biofuels](#), [Delta Dunes](#), [G4 Industries](#), [jatropha](#), [Red Colobus](#), [sustainable agriculture](#), [sustainable tourism](#), [Tana River Delta](#), [Wetlands](#)
 Comments (3)

Public hearing for jatropha biofuels in Tana River Delta

Category: [Uncategorized](#)

Date: [February 7th 2011](#)

By: [arochakenya](#)

Last week a public hearing was held for the Candian biofuel company Bedford Biofuels proposed project of planting 64,000 ha of jatropha plantations stretching from the western edge of the Tana River Delta right to the heart of the main delta and its biodiverse rich wetlands. The hearing was held in Tarasaa, a village within the delta itself and near where the plantations are being proposed to be put on community-owned ranches. Stanley and myself attended the hearing to support others who have realised the folly of replacing large areas of indigenous woodland and wetland habitats which are home to a significant population of wildlife including buffalo and elephant with a project which is effectively a desert in terms of biodiversity and water retention, will release more carbon into the atmosphere through the production of the biofuels than will be saved through the use of it, will dry the land out where it'll be grown in an area where people are already crying out for water – all for a crop which has been shown to fail in production at plantation levels at all attempts through East Africa and many beyond.



elephant [Endangered species](#) [Environmental Education](#) [Fish](#) [Jatropha Kenya](#) [KWS](#) [Lions Bluff](#) [Marine marine park](#) [Marsh Warbler](#) [Mida Creek migration](#) [Mwamba Nature Kenya](#) [NatureKenya](#) [NEMA](#) [Ngulia ringing](#) [Spotted Ground Thrush](#) [sugarcane](#) [Tana River Delta](#) [Tsavo West](#) [Tsavo West National Park](#) [Turtle Bay Beach Club](#) [Watamu](#)

- July 2009
- June 2009
- May 2009
- April 2009
- January 2009
- December 2008
- November 2008
- October 2008
- September 2008
- August 2008
- July 2008
- June 2008



There were a lot of people at the hearing...

There was, however, a very vocal and quite aggro large crowd of people who were pro the project - for the one and simple reason that they have been promised jobs in an area where it is true there are no jobs immediately available. There were dances saying how wonderful Bedford Biofuels are, and speeches waxing lyrical about the positives of the project. It was very very interesting to note how the guy who was translating from English into Swahili for the Canadian manager added a lot of his own words and embellished what was being said by the manager to drive home how positive it was and yet when he translated for me (since I had agreed with NatureKenya that it would be less 'hot' if I spoke in English rather than Swahili), he hugely minimised what I was saying such that I had to add some bits in Swahili to fill in what he had left out. If ever there was a mightily biased presentation of one side over another by a translator, this was the prize winner!



The District Commissioner who was in charge of the event handled the crowd and the sense of aggressiveness extremely well

However there were a number of community members who were really concerned about what the project was going to mean to their livelihoods and lifestyle, to their forests - "if our forest is cut down for the jatropa, where will we go to for our building materials and to graze our cattle? What will happen to the water supplies for us in an area that is already dry?". Key questions which, to be honest, I don't think were properly addressed nor answered by the Canadians.

One thing claimed by Bedford Biofuels was that jatropa has been shown to "use less water than other trees". This, of course, is a perfectly accurate statement - but which species of trees?! It will most certainly be true for eucalyptus and other species that use a lot of water, but was that study carried out looking the species of trees that are found in the Tana River Delta? Given that the report apparently came from South Africa, it is highly unlikely that this is the case. This statement is therefore misleading and inappropriate for this discussion and was clearly a further attempt at giving half-truth information to the community to persuade them jatropa is a good thing when in fact concealing the truth that by planting wide open plantations of small trees, significantly greater quantities of water will be evaporated from the surface of the exposed ground together with that which the jatropa will use than would be lost from the ground when covered in native woodland and bush. Not only that but by clearing all the vegetation it will lead to huge runoff, and in running off you get erosion which leads to rivers being filled with silt which then leads to large deposits of silt in the ocean. This can already be seen from the Sabaki River near Malindi - where erosion upstream from uncontrolled clearance of ground cover for agriculture has caused excessive erosion and as a result the land has extended almost 2kms into the ocean from where it was in the 1970s as well as the once stunning coral reef of Malindi National Marine Park is now often covered with a layer of muddy silt.

We head out today to do the annual waterbird counts of the Tana River Delta for the 6th successive year - counts which have really proven how

highly important the delta is for waterbirds, both for the region (hosting breeding populations of herons and storks that probably travel and forage as far as Tanzania in the non-breeding season) as well as for Europe and Asia. This is, in fact, an international affair as the destruction of the delta by jatropha and sugar cane will mean that we are impacting bird populations across East Africa, Europe and Asia – they are not just ‘our’ Kenyan birds...



Tarasaa post office – the village where the hearing was held

Technorati Tags: [Tana River Delta](#), [Bedford Biofuels](#), [biofuel](#), [jatropha](#), [Sabaki](#), [waterbirds](#), [public hearing](#), [NatureKenya](#), [A Rocha Kenya](#),

Tags: [A Rocha Kenya](#), [Bedford Biofuels](#), [biofuel](#), [Jatropha](#), [NatureKenya](#), [public hearing](#), [sabaki](#), [Tana River Delta](#), [waterbirds](#)

Comments (4)

Tana River Delta under increasing pressure from ‘green wash’ biofuel developments

Category: [Biofuels](#), [Tana River Delta](#), [Wetlands](#)

Date: **November 18th 2010**

By: [arochakenya](#)

It seems we’re being hammered on all sides here on the north coast of Kenya in terms of unique and precious biodiversity being threatened with destruction in the name of ‘green’ and ‘eco-friendly’ developments. As in the Dakatcha Woodlands, the highly misleadingly named ‘green fuel of Africa’, *Jatropha curcas* is being proposed for vast plantations to produce biofuel in the Tana River Delta by a Canadian company, Bedford Biofuels.

This is going to be a massive ecological disaster as the Tana River Delta is an incredibly special area for wildlife as well as for local communities that have existed for generations as pastoral people herding cattle in and out of the delta.

Bedford Biofuels have produced an EIA that initially was not being made available to the public unless you went in person to read it in the office. We do however have a pdf of it now and will post it on the www.tanariverdelta.org website. I received this from NatureKenya regarding the project:

“An EIA for the Bedford Biofuels jatropha project in Tana Delta has been produced. (It weighs 2 or 3 kilos). It was sent to the East African Wild Life Society with a cover letter (attached). They kindly loaned it to Nature Kenya, and we made a copy of the relevant pages. (However, when we phoned NEMA, they said the EIA is yet to be advertised for comments...)

Maps showing the location of the project are attached. The land is leased from Group Ranches. One Group Ranch is adjacent to the Tana River Primate National Reserve, while another one is in the heart of the Delta on the coast. However, only a part of each ranch will be used to plant Jatropha. “

The section that is the ‘heart’ of the delta is truly in the heart – right up against the sea front bang in the centre of stretch of beach and bush from Kipini down to the Tana Delta Dunes Camp. This is something which really must be stopped. I understand from friends in Calgary that Bedford Biofuels is promoting itself over the TV and other media as being an eco-friendly company that ‘helping poor communities in Africa’ to improve. This is surely not going to be the case when we know for a fact that jatropha plantations have been failing all over Africa. Read this as a quote from someone who has been doing a lot of research into jatropha as an economically viable crop:

*"The major contention that exists with the plans for planting *Jatropha curcas* for biofuels is that in much of Africa it has been categorically shown to fail as an economic crop when planted in plantations. *Jatropha* or castor companies that have closed, are seeking reinvestment or funds, or have been sold on in Africa include: Energem, ESV Bioafrica (unpaid wages for 9 months with local councillors arriving the appease the workers, sold in November 2009 to two Italian companies, Api Nova Energia Srl and Seci Energia SpA), CHEMC Agri, Bachir *Jatropha* (closed - Mozambique), Icecap (Namibia - closed) ; FloraEcopower reportedly 70% bankrupt (Ethiopia, after clearing 10,000 has forest/ allocated 80% Babile elephant sanctuary), Bioshape and Biomassive Lindi Tanzania (allocated coastal forests with large logging components). Furthermore, in Brazil - who have vastly more experience in biofuel production probably than anyone else, they are putting up just one test mechanised farm of 5,000 hectares after 20 years of research in *Jatropha* and intend to wait four years and see.*

*The sober facts are that, at the moment, based on African (and many international) experiences so far, there is no scientific or evidential basis for supporting large-scale *jatropha* plantations, especially on uncleared, communally owned and/or environmentally more valuable land."*

This is surely something that we do not want to have in Kenya and to destroy our biodiversity for nothing more than allowing some project proponent get away with large sums of investor funding and leave a desert behind them (...or am I being too cynical??).

Technorati Tags: [Tana River Delta](#), [Bedford Biofuels](#), [A Rocha Kenya](#), [Nature Kenya](#), [jatropha](#), [biofuel](#), [communities](#), [NEMA](#),

Tags: [A Rocha Kenya](#), [Bedford Biofuels](#), [biofuel](#), [communities](#), [jatropha](#), [Nature Kenya](#), [NEMA](#), [Tana River Delta](#)
 Comments (5)



About

WildlifeDirect

- How We Began
- Who's Who
- Mission
- Statement
- Who We Work With
- Advertise
- Current Campaigns
- Get Involved
- Media
- Information
- Annual Reports

Donations

- Handling Donations
- Accountability
- Get Involved

Blogs

- Search Blogs
- Eastern Africa
- Central Africa
- West Africa
- Southern Africa
- Asia
- Latin America

Subscribe 

Participate

- Get Involved
- Spread the Word
- Submit an Incident
- Carbon Tracker

Resources

- Links
- About
- Screensavers

Press

- Press Releases
- News

Legal

- Privacy Policy
- Terms of Use
- Disclaimer

WildlifeDirect is separately registered in the US (501-(c)3 not for profit) and Kenya (not for profit), aimed at helping endangered animals worldwide. No administration fee is taken for the funds that are transferred through us so that the financial support, net only of bank fees, can go where it was intended in its entirety.

WildlifeDirect ensures that 100% of your financial support (net of bank transfer fees) reaches your intended purpose. Thank you for your support towards the core costs of WildlifeDirect.