

Project Update: September 2010

The list below shows the last remaining mountain bongo estimated to be living in the forests, and the close proximity of the schools that have been nominated to be part of the conservation activities for the Mountain Bongo Project, Kenya.

The school's involvement in their protection is fundamental due to the potential proximity of these last remaining groups. Over the last few months, with the continued support of a grant from Rufford, this has supported the salary of a School Club's coordinator and a number of educational activities within the schools. Each year it is hoped to introduce a new group of children, as they reach 10/11 years into the Wildlife Clubs, to experience first hand conservation activities and experience new methods of growing food and trees, more effectively.

By supporting the schools in this way, an alliance is forming to help prevent poaching, conserve the forests and give direct educational support to the community, through the motivations of the pupils of the Mountain Bongo Wildlife Clubs. The Headmaster, the Patron and school club champions are vital to the success of the project.

Aberdares & Mt Kenya – Mountain Bongo Club (40 children each school)

Kamburaini Primary – 7 km, N Aberdares	Bongo estimated	12
Bondeni Primary – 7km Central Aberdares	Bongo estimated	14
Gichami Primary – 11 km S. Aberdares	Bongo estimated	5
Karurumo School – 5km S. Aberdares	Bongo estimated	15
Kiangemi School Mt. Kenya – from 12km	Bongo estimated	15
Githirathiru Primary Mt Kenya – from 12km	Bongo estimated	15

June 2010

Kamburaini School Potatoes Project

This school has achieved amazing results. The communities are coming from all around to visit the Kamburaini School's "potato field" as sponsored by the Bongo Wildlife Clubs project. With the support of advice from agricultural experts, this field has potential to supply the local community with a very good harvest - normal harvest would be maximum 4 potatoes per plant...these are growing, at 15 potatoes per plant! The secret is in the new potato seeds purchased from outside the area, from Timau, and the added quality of the soil. This has been achieved by adding more nutrients to the soil from the juices of the worms from a newly built school "wormery". This wormery has been so successful they will be selling their worms to Bondeni Primary School, who are also experimenting with the benefits of the wormery to the soil quality.

July 2010

Sangare Conservancy & William Holden Educational Centre Visit by Kamburaini Community members to experience the benefits of conservation first hand to Sangare Conservancy. Schools visit to Mt Kenya William Holden Centre.

September 2010

Kamburaini Primary School – Fish Pond and Seedlings. 150 fingerlings have been put into a pond built within the school. It is hoped these fish will flourish and grow enabling the pupils to have an additional source of food /income for the community. It is a learning process, in every way. Support is from the local fisheries expert in the installation, materials etc. Kamburaini School have also made eight indigenous tree seedling growing beds. They have collected the seeds from the local forest and are growing their own seedlings, which they can sell or give to the community. The seedling trees planted by the pupils in the school are doing well, and are maintained personally by each pupil. So far, Kamburaini has given 300+ trees to parents.

Aberdares National Park Educational Visit

With the support of the Rufford grant it has been possible to take 60 pupils and teachers to the Aberdares National Park. The logistics were complicated but the results outstanding. Almost all those that attended had never been into the National Park. The participants travelled in the park on the Kenyan Wildlife Service bus. The sharing of experiences between schools and the learning about the bongo and its habitat was a priority.

Visits to Gichami Primary, South Aberdares and Karurumo School, South Aberdares

These two south schools took on the challenge of doing some amazing essays on the key theme of “What would they do to increase Kenya’s forest from 3% to 10%? “. Pupils described fuel alternatives, establishing tree nurseries, involvement of local people. Certificates and educational prizes were awarded to the top three essays.

It is great to see the schools doing what they can to protect and grow trees from the seedlings. One has also a now thriving fish pond. The community after experiencing its success have already built the foundations for another.

Mt Kenya Schools Indigenous Trees A number of seedlings are now doing well. The areas are now fenced off to livestock. Pupils are looking after their own trees.

A mountain bongo special classroom has even been set up for the Wildlife Clubs. Through a schools Mountain Bongo painting competition, new artistic skills have been discovered. In August 2010, the winning paintings were displayed at Woburn Safari Park.



