



# Kenya Marine Mammal Network

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## Welcome to the third issue of the KMMN Newsletter!

We will continue to surprise you with the latest news on Kenyan Marine Mammals. Assisted by fishing vessels, diving clubs and national and international NGOs, we carry on the data collection on occurrence and abundance of marine mammals along the Kenyan coast, supporting marine mammal conservation and management strategies.



Bottlenose dolphin in Kisite Mpunguti Marine Protected Area (photo by Yatin Patel, Pili Pipa diving)

We will show you the Kenyan marine mammal hotspot locations and photos, give you an insight of the latest newborn calves, interview the Kenya Wildlife Service research assistant, Jilo Katello, introduce you to the brand new Humpback Whale catalogue. Also, we have a brand new website and we hit the news on SWARA magazine, Animal Welfare Institute and Quercus!

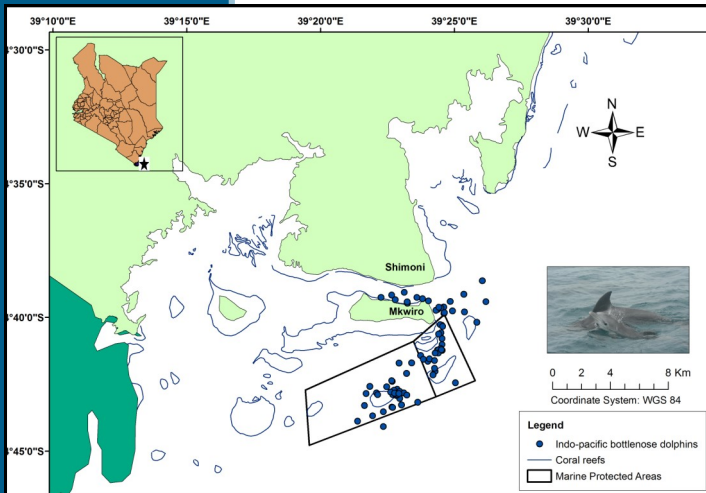
**Thank you whale & dolphin reporters, readers and all collaborators for your help in improving and expanding this network!**



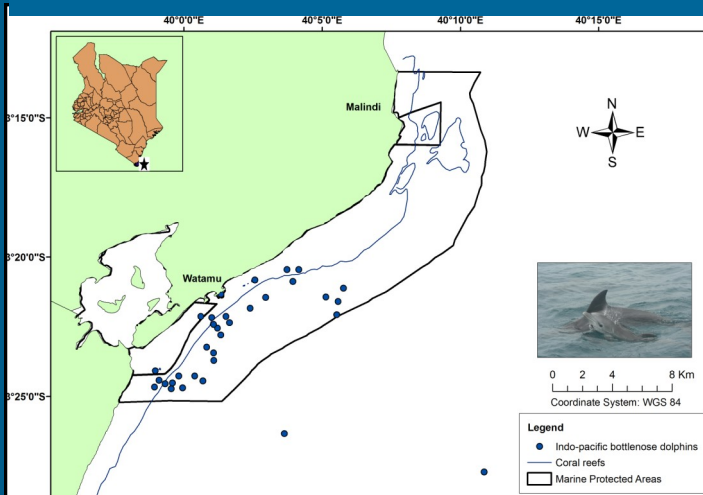
The Kenya Marine Mammal Network



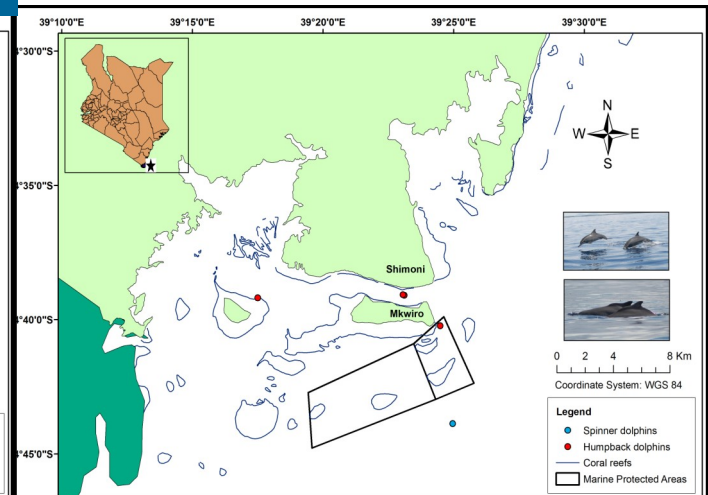
# Sightings October 2012 - March 2013



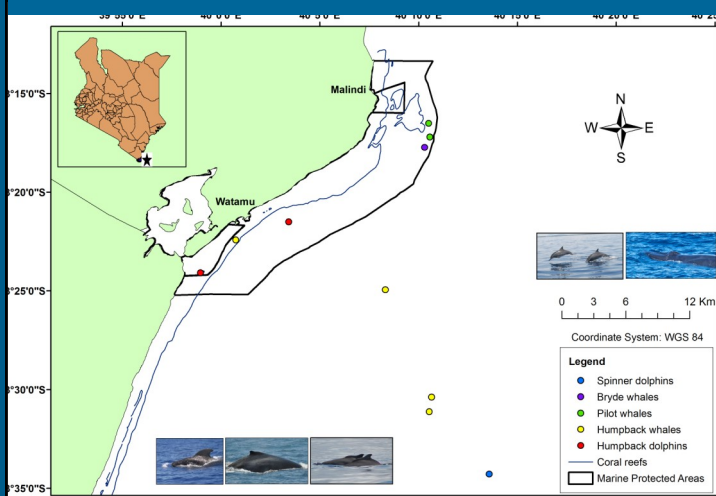
**Figure 1—Bottlenose dolphin distribution in Kisite Mpunguti MPA**



**Figure 2—Bottlenose dolphin distribution in Watamu Malindi MPA**



**Figure 3—Spinner dolphins and Humpback dolphins distribution in Kisite Mpunguti MPA**



**Figure 4—Other marine mammals distribution in Watamu Malindi MPA**

From October 2012 to March 2013, 196 sightings were reported from 13 collaborators. The reports came from Shimoni (South coast) to Malindi-Watamu (North coast) and the most sighted locations were: Watamu (107 sightings) and Kwale (89).

A total of 6 cetacean species were spotted, being the Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins the most sighted species (Fig. 1 and 2). It was mainly reported from inside the Marine Protected Areas (Kisite-Mpunguti and Watamu-Malindi MPA), which these animals use for socializing, feeding and resting.

Other reports include Humpback whales, Humpback dolphins, Spinner dolphins, Pilot whales and the first sighting of Bryde's whale reported to the Kenya Marine Mammal Network.

Nearly 50% of these sightings came from the Watamu Association of Boat Operators (WABO), who take tourists to the Watamu-Malindi MPA, and deep sea fishermen fishing offshore Watamu.

**Get ready for the humpback whale season arriving in Kenya probably early July until November 2013!**





## THE KENYA MARINE MAMMAL NETWORK PHOTOS



Photo by George Allen, Jasiri, Kenya

A Bryde's whale was spotted offshore Malindi waters in February 2013. It can be confused with the larger sei whale (*Balaenoptera borealis*), but is distinguished by the three distinctive ridges that run from the tip of the rostrum to the rear of the head. This whale can be found alone or in mother-calf pairs, but on occasion loose aggregations may form, probably due to the proximity of a productive feeding ground (**Male length:** 13.7 m, **Female length:** 14.5 m, **Weight** 16 – 18.5 tonnes ).

Photo by Stuart Simpson



Pod of Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins in Kisite Mpunguti MPA. Photos by kind courtesy of Adam Pierce, Sander Den Haring and Yasin Patel of Pili Pipa divers (April 2013).

Dolphin encounters in Wasini channel, Southern Kenya (Photo by GVI, January 2013)



## Humpback Whale Distribution and Abundance inside and around Marine Protected Areas in the South and North Kenyan Coast



Chloe Corne, working on the creation of a *Humpback Whale Photo Identification catalogue*, to understand distribution, abundance and migration routes in Kenya and along the Western Indian Ocean.

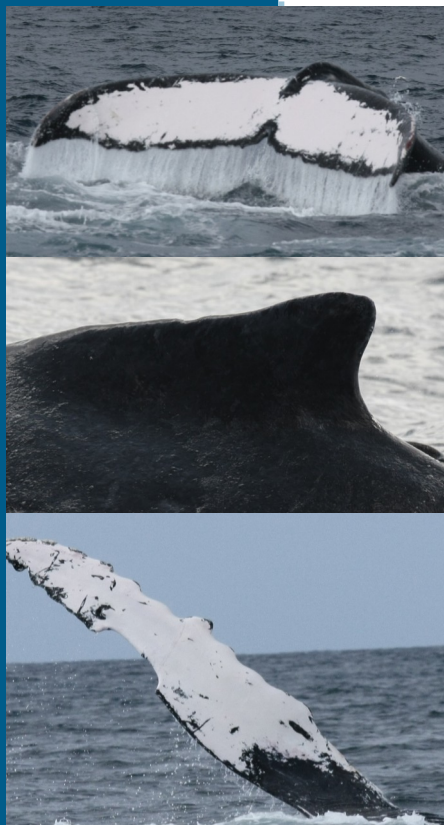
Humpback whales are seasonal visitors to Kenya's coast, migrating from their feeding grounds in Antarctica to the tropics to mate and give birth during the austral winter. With populations once decimated by systematic, commercial whaling, their numbers appear to be making a steady comeback.

2012 was a productive year for humpback whale sightings in Kenya. On the South Coast, Global Vision International (GVI) recorded 17 sightings of 54 whales in the Kisite Mpunguti Marine Protected Area (KMMPA) and surrounding areas of Funzi, Nyuli Reef and Wasini Channel. And on the North Coast, through their ever developing and expanding cetacean reporting network, the Watamu Marine Association (WMA) holds records of 57 sightings of 160 whales for 2012.

The development of **Humpback Whale Photo Identification catalogues at both GVI and WMA**, with the inclusion of dorsal fins, tail fluke and pectoral fin pigmentation, allows for mark-recapture analysis of the humpback whale seasonal population in Kenya. Tail fluke and pectoral fin pigmentation are distinctly unique to each animal and are the best means of identifying an individual. However, as the shallow coastal or reef areas where most of the sightings took place prohibited deep dives by the whales (making it difficult to photograph the underside of the tail fluke), dorsal fins were also included in the catalogues.

**In total, 3610 photographs of whales sighted by GVI and WMA were analysed. The GVI catalogue consists of 61 adults which have visited Kisite in the 59 recorded sightings since 2007. Eight of these were mothers with calves. The WMA catalogue, developed as part of a collaboration between GVI and WMA, identifies 12 adult individuals, all of which were sighted in 2012.** In total, 181 animals have been reported to WMA in 60 different reports since 2011. As the reporting network in Watamu continues to grow, including local fisherman and the game fishing industry, the large increase in reported whale sightings since 2011 demonstrates the importance of including and developing information networks in the local communities.

Careful analysis and comparison of both catalogues revealed that to date, there have been no recaptures of individuals between the North and South Coast. Maintenance of both catalogues will ensure that comparisons of animals sighted can be made in the future; recaptures will increase our understanding of their distribution, abundance and migration routes.





## Responsible Marine Wildlife Watching



The GVI marine team carried out a one day training to 15 members of the recently created Kisite Boat Operators Association on dolphin watching best practices and also on customer services and behaviour to increase professionalism and promote ecotourism principles. GVI also presented the tourists feedback collected through questionnaires on the dolphin-watching trips over the last year, where tourist highlighted the importance of

*“Analysis on the number of tourists and their nationality have showed the increasing number of Kenyan tourists visiting the area over the last years, from 10560 in 2008 to 16237 in 2010. “*

providing good information on marine mammals and the environment around Kisite-Mpunguti MPA. Analysis on the number of tourists visiting the national park and their nationality have relevantly showed the increasing number of Kenyan tourists visiting the area over the last years, from 10560 in 2008 to 16237 in 2010. KWS is working closely with GVI to try and ensure the guidelines are followed. The response so far from boat operators who have been trained is good and compliance to guidelines is high.

## KMMN collaborates with Kenyatta University

**Congratulations to Mohamed Ahmed Hussein**, who recently completed his Bachelor Science degree in Coastal and Marine Resources Management from Kenyatta University.

For his bachelor thesis he collaborated with GVI, WMA and KMMN to study the *“Distribution, group size and behavior of the Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin (Tursiops aduncus) population in the Watamu Marine Protected Area (MPA) Kenya”* supervised by Sergi Perez, Jane Spilsbury and Dr. Bernerd Fulanda.



Kahindi Charo (Mida Creek Conservation Community and WMA research volunteer) and Mohamed Ahmed during dolphin surveys in Watamu MPA.

Data collected from November-April (2010-2013) showed a 96% of the sightings within the MPA, an average group size of about 15 dolphins, with feeding being the most common behaviour and an encounter rate of about 1 dolphin every 3 hours. These results could indicate an important role played by MPAs as feeding grounds for dolphins due to restricted fishing activities and also as a sanctuary for young calves.

Also, he is the new Programme manager for GVI Kenya South Coast and continues to actively collaborate in Marine Research and Educational Programs.



## Newborn dolphins in Kisite Mpunguti MPA



Thalia Pereira doing boat surveys to identify new individuals.

Kisite-Mpunguti Marine Protected Area (KMMPA) is a popular feeding ground as well as home to several groups of Indo-Pacific Bottlenose dolphins, some which are present all year round, while others are seasonal migrants.

Since GVI started studying Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops aduncus*) in the KMMPA in 2006, a catalogue has been put together whereby individual dolphins are identified by their dorsal fins. The dorsal fins are marked with notches which are unique to each individual, just as the fingerprints are to humans, and the individuals are identified by numbers. Of the 182 individuals identified up to December 2012, at least 27 of these are known females, accounting for approximately 15% of the population.



Female (036) and 1st calf  
2006 - 2007



Female (036) and 2nd calf  
2008-2012



Females (036) and (060)  
with their 3rd calves  
2013

In 2006, the following females were seen with calves: females 36, 60, 61, 62, 72. Between 2009 and 2012, individuals 60, 62 and 72 were seen with their second calves identified by GVI. Individual 36 had her second calf in 2008. And this year (2013), individuals 61, 62 and 72 were seen with newborns again, these being 62 and 72's third calves, while the other was 61's second calf.

**With these sightings, we can see that the KMMPA is an important breeding and calving area for this species.**

This information is essential for the future management of the dolphin watching tourism and their interactions with the breeding population of Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins.







# KMMN on the news!

Over the last months, the Kenya Marine Mammal Network has been on the international media promoting the goals of this initiative and explaining the results from the data collected since May 2011. The articles were published on SWARA, Quercus and the Animal Welfare Institute publication.

SWARA magazine is the shop window and the public face of the East African Wildlife Society. The magazine — its Swahili name means antelope — has been through several changes in some four decades of existence.

## Conservación INTERNACIONAL Marzo 2013

Gracias a la colaboración entre autoridades y conservacionistas

### El turismo de cetáceos, objeto de control en el sur de Kenia

El turismo de observación de cetáceos está al alza a lo largo y ancho del planeta. Al sur de Kenia, las comunidades próximas al Área Marina Protegida de Kisite-Mpunguti se benefician de esta actividad, cuyo impacto en las poblaciones de delfines es objeto de seguimiento conjunto entre autoridades y conservacionistas.

por Sergio Rojas y Sergi Pérez

En el extremo sur de la costa keniana, cerca de la frontera con Tanzania, se encuentra el Área Marina Protegida (AMP) de Kisite-Mpunguti. Este tramo de aguas litorales y poco profundas lo forman el mayor parque marino (Kisite) del país, con 28 kilómetros cuadrados, y la menor reserva marina (Mpunguti), con 11 kilómetros cuadrados. La gestión recae en el Kenya Wildlife Service, organismo gubernamental responsable de la gestión de los parques nacionales.

La AMP, por albergar algunos de los mejores arrecifes de coral de Kenia, ofrece un excelente buceo. También contiene importantes áreas de alimentación durante todo el año para los delfines mular del Indo-Pacífico (*Tursiops aduncus*), entre otras especies de cetáceos, por lo que es un destino frecuentado para el whale-watching.

La biodiversidad de Kisite-Mpunguti ha atraído al turismo a la zona y la afluencia de visitantes se ha multiplicado durante los últimos años, hasta el punto de que los ingresos superan a muchos de los par-

ques y reservas terrestres del país.

Pero también se ha hecho necesaria una gestión adecuada del turismo que asegure la continuidad de estos recursos, así como de los beneficios que conllevan para las comunidades locales. Por este motivo, una entidad, Global Vision International (GVI), colabora con el Kenya Wildlife Service monitorizando las poblaciones de mamíferos marinos de la zona (ver cuadro).

Un centenar de turistas GVI lleva desarrollando sus campañas alrededor de Kisite-

Mpunguti desde hace casi diez años. Para ello se cuenta con el barco de investigación Bar-don, embarcación tradicional árabe de casi diez metros de eslora, desde donde se recoge información sobre diferentes especies de delfines, como el número de ejemplares, su comportamiento y otros datos ambientales de relevancia.

Entre los años 2006 y 2009 se recomptaron más de 13.000 kilómetros en el seguimiento de estos cetáceos y ya se registró en total casi medio millar de observaciones.

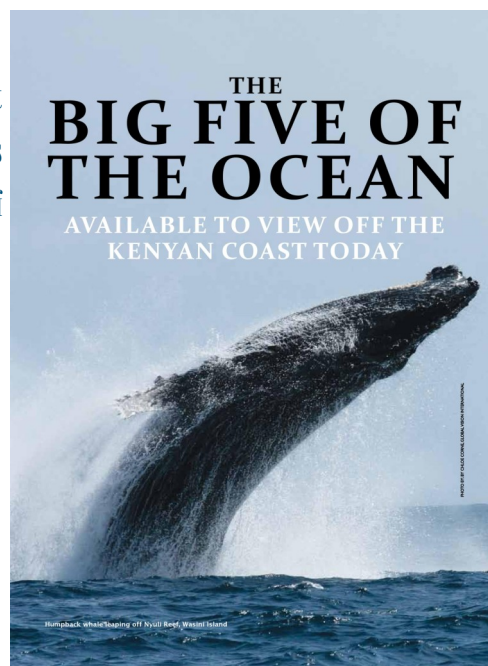
Gracias a la técnica de la foto-identificación, se realizó una estimación de una población de aproximadamente un centenar de ejemplares de delfín mular del Indo-Pacífico. Otra especie con numerosos avistamientos fue el delfín de joroba del Indo-Pacífico (*Stenella cymensis*), que cuenta con unos treinta animales identificados alrededor de Kisite-Mpunguti. Es el cetáceo que muestra una mayor interacción con las pesquerías locales.



Grupo de delfines acrobáticos de hocico largo perteneciente a la población del Área Marina Protegida de Kisite-Mpunguti (Kenia). Foto: S. Rojas.

58 Quercus 525 - mayo 2013

www.quercus.es

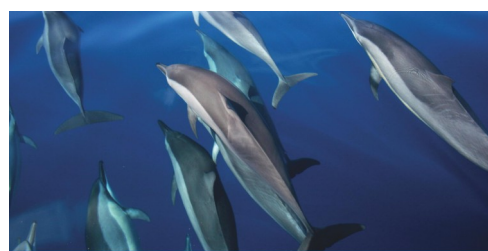


## THE BIG FIVE OF THE OCEAN

AVAILABLE TO VIEW OFF THE KENYAN COAST TODAY

Humpback Whale breaching off Nyali Reef, Wasini Island

Quercus is a monthly magazine specializing in disseminating papers, articles and reports on observation, study and protection of nature publish in Spain.



## Watamu Marine Association Aims for Cetacean Safeguards on Kenyan Coast

The Watamu Marine Association (WMA) was established in 2007 in Kenya in order to bring together members from the community, tourism and environmental sectors in the coastal resort town of Watamu to promote community development and empowerment, and to advocate for the protection and preservation of Watamu Marine National Park and Reserve. The following article by WMA's Jane Spillbury discusses some of the threats to Kenya's marine mammals and reports on WMA's efforts, through the Kenya Marine Mammal Network, to establish baseline data to facilitate conservation efforts.

Relatively little is known about marine mammal species inhabiting Kenya's inshore and coastal waters. Disconcertingly, some of these species are believed to be in steady decline in the Western Indian Ocean, facing significant threats such as becoming bycatch in fishing gear, loss of habitat, overfishing, unregulated dolphin, whale-watching activities and, in recent years, the oil and gas industry. For these reasons, there is an urgent need to gain a more comprehensive understanding and data set for these species. As no research had previously been conducted for the north coast region of Kenya, the Watamu Marine Association started studying marine

mammals in 2010 for the first time in Watamu Marine National Park and Watamu Marine National Reserve, in order to collect baseline data about species, distribution and abundance. WMA partnered with Global Vision International (GVI), a marine mammal research organization that has been working on the Kenyan south coast, in Kisite-Mpunguti Marine Park since 2006. The two groups have recorded more than 1,200 sightings from four different cetacean species: Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin, Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin, spinner dolphin, and humpback whale. These data have given us a greater understanding of the animals' distribution and movement, as well

The Animal Welfare Institute was founded in 1951 and is dedicated to alleviating suffering inflicted on animals by humans. The institute has a quarterly publication on a variety of subjects, including marine life.



KENYA MARINE MAMMAL NETWORK

# Interview with Jilo Katello



Jilo Katello is a Kenya Wildlife Service Research Assistant in Kisite Mpunguti MPA.

My name is Jilo Katello Wato, a pastoralist boy who grew up in one of the Kenya's remote area called Chalbi Desert in Marsabit. I have been working with Kenya Wildlife Service for the 12 Years. I started work in Tsavo as a Ranger for 6 years and left to take on a diploma in Environmental Management. After completion of my Diploma in 2007 I got an opportunity to be re-designated to the Research department. I am now working in Coast Conservation area in Kisite/Mpunguti Marine Park as a Research Assistant. Working in Marine environment for the first time was challenging, however, the training I had with Global Vision International gave me an edge to work well in marine environment. I was also trained by KWS in Scuba diving which further added value to my field work as a scientist. Currently I hold a Degree in Environmental Science from Moi University, a milestone in my science oriented work. Field exposure while working with different partner research organizations also gave me an upper hand to work in one of the finest Marine Park in Kenya.

## What do you think about the Kenya Marine Mammal Network? I

think it's a gracious and noble idea, when people, organization or individuals join hands in conservation effort. It's even pleasing when people are dedicated to share knowledge and information on rarely seen marine mammals through an established sighting network so as to inform, and establish dataset for decision making and management.

## Why is it important to protect these cetacean populations? Oh

yes, it is very important to protect Cetacean Population just like other living creatures because they have right to life and right to exist freely without any human disturbance regardless of their use value. Wild dolphins are intrinsically tied to our cultural history and awareness thus deserves protection from willing destructive human appetite.

Secondly, cetaceans contribute enormously to local social-economy adjacent to protected areas, given that it's the integral for tourist attraction thereby earning country foreign exchange. Cetaceans are also important component of marine ecosystems; they are at the top of food chain in the trophic level, and their elimination means imbalance within an ecosystem which may trigger unknown problems. It must also be kept in mind that, ultimately, human survival too depends on intact ecosystems and biodiversity.

*“...I think it's a gracious and noble idea, when people, organization or individuals join hands in conservation effort....through an established sighting network so as to inform, and establish dataset for decision making and management.”*







**How significant is the dolphin-watching activity (social and economically) for the local communities around Kisite-Mpunguti MPA?** Very significant indeed. It is a very important economic activity for the communities adjacent to the MPA (Shimoni, Wasini and Mkwiro). The main income generating activities in small centres surrounding Kisite Mpunguti are mainly Fishing and Tourism.

These communities are predominantly Islamic and classified under the Digo tribe although the languages spoken are Kivumba, Kifundi and Kidigo. In recent years there has been influx of different cultures and tribes due to an increase in employment and investment opportunities in different sectors in this area, especially due to tourism brought about by magical attractions of dolphins among other mega fauna. Traditional dhow tours are carried out through the Islands and enchanting ever blue sea to the wonderful nature that exists in the marine park. Many tourists who come for dolphin watching also use existing community facilities like hotels and boost their businesses.

**What is KWS doing towards cetacean conservation?** KWS is mandated to protect and conserve and manage wildlife in Kenya on behalf of the Kenyan Government and on behalf of Kenyan People for posterity. Therefore our endeavours is to protect wild dolphins and create an ocean home that is safe and free from harm for them to inhabit. Some of the aspects we have undertaken to achieve this include; educating to create awareness of dolphin species, their conservation status and the threats they face to their survival and actions that could help with their conservation and the protection of their habitats and ecosystems.

We also involve local community based conservation groups (CBO's) marine patrols and conservation efforts; KWS also organizes and holds awareness event, beach cleanup exercises, workshops and meetings and collaborate with Fisheries department for sustainable fisheries. As part of our Corporate Social responsibilities as an organization. we support communities to build facilities such as school blocks, health facilities, toilets, among others. We also partner with Government agencies and NGO's for research and for management decision making.

Finally, related to marine mammals, and for sustainability purpose we have also come up with dolphin watching code of conduct with stakeholders and guide marine resource users, especially boat operators to adhere to code of conduct always.

***“...tourism brought about by magical attractions of dolphins among other mega fauna. Traditional dhow tours are carried out through the Islands and enchanting ever blue sea to the wonderful nature that exists in the marine park.”***



**Thank you!**

Jillo Katello Wato  
e-mail-jjkatello@gmail.com



# The NETWORK is on the WEB!



<http://kenyammnetwork.wix.com/kmmnetwork>

*We hope you enjoy it  
and would love to hear  
your feedback*

[kenyammnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:kenyammnetwork@gmail.com)

We are very pleased to announce the launch of our new website, including some features that we hope will make visiting the site an informative, easy and interactive experience. Our goal with this new site is to provide our visitors with an easy way to learn about the network, its aims and current achievements. We will be adding new research on a regular basis, publications, volunteer opportunities and photo galleries.

## KMMN new collaborators: Cheruiyot and Japheth

We want to welcome our two new collaborator that have recently joined the Kenya Marine Mammal Network: **Cheruiyot Elijah Mutai** and **Japheth Musila**, 3rd year students of the Coastal and Marine Resources Management Bachelor course from Kenyatta University.

They are doing an good job in researching and writing about some marine mammal species that inhabit along the Kenyan coast ( Indo-Pacific bottlenose and humpback dolphins, Spinner dolphins, Humpback whales, Killer whales and Pilot whales). The articles they have prepared are posted on the KMMN Facebook group page. <http://www.facebook.com/groups/337609786293492/files/>



Thank you and Welcome!



KENYA MARINE MAMMAL NETWORK



# KMMN Collaborators

The following people provided valuable contribution to the Kenya Marine Mammal Network: Shikami Kennedy (Fisheries officer), John Karungo (Fisheries Observer), Kathryn Wheatley (Marine Mammal Observer - FAR Limited), Hassan Makame, Ishmail Athman, Fazwal Lali and Althman Lali (Watamu Youth Development Community), Callum Looman, Abraham, Billy Sadiki, Richard Bennett, Mohamed Fadhili, Pete Darnborough, Mohammed Athman, Phil Revett, Rob Hellier, Stuart Simpson, Sander Der Har- ing (Buccaneer Diving), Christian Koellnberger (Diving the crab), Steve Webb, Steve George, Rob Coverdale; Jane Spilsbury and Steve Trott (Watamu Marine Association) and the WMA Volunteer Research Team, all members of the Watamu Association of Boat Operators (WABO), Simon Hemphill (Sea adventures Ltd. and Kenya Sea Anglers Association), Louis and John van Aardt (Kizingo), Sergi Perez, Chloe Corne, Thalia Pereira, Zeno Wijten, Inês Gomes, Mohamed Ahmed and all the volunteers (GVI), Dr. Nina Wambiji (KMFRI), Dr. Bernerd Fulanda (KMFRI), Dr. Mohamed Omar Said (KWS), Warden Richard Lemarkat (KWS), Warden Dixon Korir (KWS) Jilo Katello (KWS) and KWS researcher Lynn Njuguna . The WMA Research Program is supported by the African Fund for Endangered Wildlife (Kenya).

*Thank you very much!*

*Asanteni sana!*

## KENYA MARINE MAMMAL NETWORK

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Kenya Marine Mammal Network



# GET INVOLVED!

With the Kenya Marine Mammal Network (KMMN)

Report your marine mammal sightings and help us to create a better understanding of these species

### The Network

The Kenya Marine Mammal Network aims to provide the first consistent data on occurrence and abundance of marine mammals along the Kenyan coast using sport fishing vessels, diving clubs and NGOs as a platform of opportunity.

This project will help to define areas of "High Importance" for marine mammals, which is critical to improve the conservation of these species in the region.

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Organizers



Partners

