

BIRDS OF
DAKATCHA
WOODLAND IBA



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Cover: **Kikokoi** Chestnut-fronted Helmetshrike by Washington Wachira

BIRDS OF **DAKATCHA** *WOODLAND IBA*

This book is an introduction to the birds of Dakatcha Woodland. Here you will find photos of the birds, their scientific, English and Giriama names.

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BIRDS OF DAKATCHA WOODLAND IBA

The birds in this book are a selection of the birds found in Dakatcha Woodland. They include the birds you are most likely to see. The special, threatened birds that live in Dakatcha Woodland Important Bird Area are also included. Once you are familiar with these birds, you will find many more.

Some of the birds in Dakatcha Woodland are rare and little known. For instance, the nests of Clarke's Weavers were only reported in 2013. Scientists still do not know the full life history and movements of these birds. By late-2017, the nests of Sokoke Scops Owl and Sokoke Pipit had not been found. YOU may discover something new for science!

An Important Bird and Biodiversity Area

The birds called Clarke's Weavers have only been seen in Kilifi County: here in Dakatcha Woodland, and in Arabuko-Sokoke Forest to the south. Their nests have only been seen in the seasonal wetlands in the forests of Dakatcha Woodland. Because of this small range, Clarke's Weaver is considered Globally Endangered, according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. In other words, this species could become extinct if it loses its special habitat.

As the home of Clarke's Weaver, Sokoke Scops Owl and Sokoke Pipit – all globally endangered species – Dakatcha Woodland is considered an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA). All over the world, IBAs have been identified as key sites for the conservation of birds and other living things. Dakatcha Woodland IBA is also home to a rich variety of birds of the East African Coastal Forests biome, or ecosystem.

The landscape

Dakatcha Woodland IBA is about 188,000 hectares on gently rolling hills. It is north of the Galana-Sabaki River and just 3 degrees south of the equator.

The forests of **Mrihi** (*Brachystegia spiciformis*) trees stretch north and west of the town of Marafa, together with farmland, patches of grassland, scrub, mixed forest, and permanent and seasonal wetlands. There are scenic views of Mwangea Hill and the Galana-Sabaki River.

Dakatcha Woodland is in Marafa Division, Magarini sub-county of Kilifi County. Magarini sub-county covers 1,675 Km² and is divided into six locations: Marafa, Garashi, Bungale, Dagamra, Chamari and Adu.

Most of Dakatcha Woodland IBA occupies land that is held in trust by Kilifi County Government on behalf of the local inhabitants. However, part of Dakatcha Woodland IBA is located within the government-owned Galana Ranch.

The natural vegetation includes:

- Forests of *Mrihi Brachystegia spiciformis* and other trees on white sands, with grassy open glades. This forest, together with part of Arabuko-Sokoke and Madunguni forests, forms the northern-most forest of *Brachystegia spiciformis*.
- Forests and thickets of *Cynometra webberi* and other trees on hilltops and red soils.
- Mixed forest of *Julbernardia magnistipulata*, *Azelia quanzensis* and other large trees in the valleys
- Seasonal wetlands filled with grasses, sedges and water lilies.
- Spiny and succulent plants such as *Euphorbia*, *Sansevieria* and *Vanilla* spp. in some areas.
- Rare and threatened species such as *Warburgia stuhlmannii*

Farmland includes fields of maize on clayey black ngama soil, pineapples on red soil, cassava on sandy sisoni soils, and coconut, cashew and mango trees. There is also farmland that was abandoned because of low soil fertility, now filled with bushes.

Dakatcha Woodland hosts important cultural attractions. The grave of Mekatilili wa Menza, a woman hero of the resistance to colonial rule, has become the venue for an annual cultural festival. Traditional Giriama dances and songs entertain visitors. A cultural site of the Watha people is being developed. Kaya Singwaya south of the IBA is gazetted as a National Monument under the National Museums of Kenya, and Kapangani Rock, at the highest point in the IBA, is a cultural site.

The People

The main inhabitants of the Dakatcha area today are the Giriama people and the Watha people. Giriama is also written Giriyama, and Watha is also written Waata. The Giriama are part of the Mijikenda ethnic group of Coastal Kenya. Kauma people live near the river to the south, and since the 1980s people from other parts of Kenya have migrated into the area.

Bird names in the Giriama (Giriyama) language, as used in Dakatcha, are given in this bird book. Not all the names have been recorded, and research is ongoing. Watha names will be compiled for a later edition. As far as

possible the names have been written using current style, but spellings may vary. If you have additions or corrections, please get in touch with:

Dakatcha Woodland Conservation Group:

email: dakatchawoodland2015@gmail.com

Or contact Julio Mwambire: 0725-082464

or Patrick Changawa 0724-618661

Or visit the DWCG and Nature Kenya Resource Centre near Hell's Kitchen in Marafa.

Conservation issues

The forests, thickets, wetlands and grasslands of Dakatcha Woodland provide ecosystem services such as water catchment, soil conservation, climate moderation and storage of carbon dioxide. These habitats are a source of medicines, food, fibre and fodder for the people. And the birds of Dakatcha Woodland depend on these natural habitats for survival.

For people and birds to survive in a healthy environment, we need to conserve the remaining forests of Dakatcha Woodland for our common future.

Using this book

On the following pages are photos of the most common and special birds that you may see in Dakatcha. For a longer list of the birds of the area, see the *Checklist of the Birds of Dakatcha Woodland*, published by Nature Kenya in 2009.

The birds in this book are listed in the habitat where they usually live:

1. Birds of forest, woodland, bush, farmland, and seen flying over
2. Birds of wetlands (rivers, dams and seasonal pools)
3. Birds seen mostly in urban areas (towns and market centres)

In each habitat, birds are listed in the same way as in the *Checklist of the Birds of Kenya*, 2009.

The bird's English name is in ordinary type

The scientific name is in *italics*

The Giriama name is in **bold** type

1. COMMON AND SPECIAL BIRDS OF DAKATCHA WOODLAND, SEEN IN FOREST, WOODLAND, BUSH, FARMLAND AND FLYING OVER

Guineafowls



Helmeted Guineafowl
Numida meleagris
Khanga

Live in bush, farms and forest edge



Crested Guineafowl
Guttera pucherani
Khololo

These guineafowl with blue-white spots are usually in small flocks in forest



Vulturine Guineafowl
Acryllium vulturinum
Ngwelele

Live mostly in dry areas

Francolins and Quails



Coqui Francolin
Francolinus coqui
Hep'e

They sing "Ko-ki! Ko-ki!"



Crested Francolin
Francolinus sephaena
Khereng'endze

They sing loudly in the morning

Birds of Prey



African Black-shouldered Kite
Elanus caeruleus
Kambilolo

Children sing to this bird when they see it hovering in the sky looking for prey.



Southern Banded Snake Eagle
Circaetus fasciolatus

It sings a loud, rolling song



Bateleur
Terathopius ecaudatus
P'ungu

Seen flying overhead, tipping from side to side



African Harrier Hawk
Polyboroides typus

Hangs upside-down in trees to feed on weaverbird chicks; also eats insect larvae



African Goshawk
Accipiter tachiro
Kahanga

A fierce hunter of the forest



Lizard Buzzard
Kaupifalco monogrammicus
Kahanga munyevu

Often seen as it perches in trees on roadsides or forest edge



Long-crested Eagle
Lophaetus occipitalis

It feeds on rats and mice, and is the logo for Nature Kenya

Plovers



Senegal Plover
Vanellus lugubris
Shoko

Usually seen in grassland and ploughed fields

Pigeons and Doves



African Green Pigeon
Treron calvus
Ninga

A colourful bird that feeds in fruiting trees such as the wild fig trees



Red-eyed Dove
Streptopelia semitorquata
Giya-mangamanga

This large dove's song says, "TO GET [something], Work hard, word hard!"



Ring-necked Dove
Streptopelia capicola
Giya-peruperu

The song of this dove is short and harsh, repeated many times



Tambourine Dove
Turtur tympanistria
Kathoro P'uje

A small dove of the forest, with a song similar to the Emerald-spotted Wood Dove



Emerald-spotted Wood Dove
Turtur chalcospilos
Kathoro

This small dove's songs tell many stories:

1. Mother Dove left flour in the pot. When she came back the flour was gone; now she sings "The pot is empty, empty, empty, empty..."
2. Dove had a powerful beak and neck muscles, but Woodpecker borrowed them for a party, and left Dove with a small beak and weak neck muscles. Now Dove sings, "Woodpecker took my hard beak... and gave me soft muscles, soft muscles, soft muscles..."

Parrots and Lovebirds



Brown-headed Parrot
Poicephalus cryptoxanthus
Kili

Noisy, colourful birds, often in small flocks

Turacos



Fischer's Turaco
Tauraco fischeri
Kulukulu

A beautiful large bird with a loud deep call

Cuckoos and Coucals



Klaas's Cuckoo
Chrysococcyx klaas

Cuckoos lay their eggs in the nests of other birds and the other birds raise the young



Yellowbill
Ceuthmochares aereus
Musanya-ng'andu

More often heard than seen, usually from May to November. It raises its own young



White-browed Coucal
Centropus superciliosus
Gude

Lives near water and raises its own young; sings like water pouring from a bottle

Owls



Sokoke Scops Owl
Otus irenae

A small owl found only in coastal forests. It feeds on insects. It is internationally Endangered



African Wood Owl
Strix woodfordii
Kimburu

Owls help to control pests by feeding on mice, rats and insects



African Barred Owlet
Glaucidium capense
Kamburu-pape

A small owl with a loud song; feeds on rodents and other small animals and insects



Verreaux's Eagle Owl
Bubo lacteus

A large owl with a deep hooting call

Nightjars



Fiery-necked Nightjar
Caprimulgus pectoralis
Kambogwe

People fear birds who call at night; they use salt to keep away this nightjar

Swifts



Little Swift
Apus affinis

Katsumbwirizi, Katsungurizi

Swifts spend most of their time flying, catching insects as they fly. The African Palm Swift *Cypsiurus parvus* has long thin wings and body

Mousebirds



Speckled Mousebird
Colius striatus
Panza

Live near farms or bushy places, and feed on fruits, flowers and young leaves



Blue-naped Mousebird
Urocolius macrourus
Mbuche

Found in bush and dry areas; makes a high-pitched, whining call

Trogons



Narina Trogon
Apaloderma narina
Muninga muninga

A beautiful bird of the forest; it feeds on insects

Rollers



Broad-billed Roller
Eurystomus glaucurus
Chore

Its call tells you that it is dinner time



Lilac-breasted Roller
Coracias caudatus
Goto

They roll in the sky in their display flight; they nest in holes in trees



Eurasian Roller
Coracias garrulus
Gongo-nyika

These migrate to Europe and Asia; in March-April, hundreds may fly through Dakatcha

Kingfishers



Grey-headed Kingfisher
Halcyon leucocephala
Muchehele

Lives away from water, it eats insects



African Pygmy Kingfisher
Ceyx pictus
Kashaha, Kachelele

A story says Kashaha is so proud of its bright colours that it thinks it is big. When it lands on a branch it raises its shoulders, wondering, “will this branch hold my weight?”



Striped Kingfisher
Halcyon chelicuti
Kariro

Lives away from water, has a loud rolling song



Mangrove Kingfisher
Halcyon senegaloides
Muchelele mkoko

Lives in forest and feeds on insects

Bee-eaters



Little Bee-eater
Merops pusillus

Most birds will not eat bees or wasps. But bee-eaters catch them and squeeze out the poison in the sting before swallowing them.



White-throated Bee-eater
Merops albicollis
Katotoyo

They migrate within Africa, and are usually seen from October to April



Madagascar Bee-eater
Merops superciliosus
Mborode

Resident at the Coast in small numbers



Eurasian Bee-eater
Merops apiaster
Mutumwa wa murisa wa ng'ombe

In March-April they migrate to Europe and Asia to nest, returning in September-October



Northern Carmine Bee-eater
Merops nubicus
Murisa wa ng'ombe

They gather at grass fires to catch escaping insects, and sometimes sit on cows, goats or sheep; usually seen from November to March

Wood-hoopoes



Green Wood-hoopoe
Phoeniculus purpureus
**Njejemera/
Njojomera**

They travel together in small flocks, feeding on insects in the bark of trees



Common Scimitarbill
Rhinopomastus cyanomelas
Kamoo

Often heard calling in the forest

Hornbills



Crowned Hornbill
Tockus alboterminatus
Kw'embe

A prominent bird of the forest



African Grey Hornbill
Tockus nasutus
Kw'embe wa nyika

Lives in dry areas; has a high-pitched song



Von der Decken's Hornbill
Tockus deckeni
Varuvaru

Lives in dry areas; females have a black beak



Trumpeter Hornbill
Bycanistes bucinator
Handalumwe

A big and handsome bird with a mournful song

Barbets and Tinkerbirds



Red-fronted
Tinkerbird
Pogoniulus pusillus
Kamango

A small bird whose “trrr-trrr-trrr-trrr” song is often heard. It also sings a single note, repeated many times.



Brown-breasted Barbet
Lybius melanopterus
Gandegande

The Black-collared Barbet,
Lybius torquatus, looks
similar



Red-and-yellow Barbet
Trachyphonus erythrocephalus

Large and colourful bird of dry
areas

Honeyguides



Scaly-throated Honeyguide
Indicator variegatus
Ts'ewi

This honeyguide follows
honey hunters in the forest
but does not guide them

Woodpeckers



Nubian Woodpecker
Campethera nubica
Mukokota-nyuni

Some people say the call of this woodpecker predicts whether a journey will be a success or failure



Mombasa Woodpecker
Campethera mombassica
Mukokota

Woodpeckers feed on insects in the bark and wood of trees; you may hear them drilling in the wood

Batisses and relatives



Pale Batis
Batis soror
Kabombombo

Batisses are tiny birds that sing and also make a sound with their wings



Black-headed Batis
Batis minor
Kaforo

The call of this small bird is a typical sound of the bush and forest

Helmetshrikes, Bushshrikes, Tchagras and Puffbacks



Retz's Helmetshrike
Prionops retzii
Kikokoi nzovu

Helmetshrikes travel through the forest in family flocks, calling to each other



Chestnut-fronted Helmetshrike
Prionops scopifrons
Kikokoi

Special birds of the coastal forest, especially **Mrihi** forest



Grey-headed Bush-Shrike
Malaconotus blanchoti
Mwanguwo

People fear that its call predicts that someone will die, and they chase it away



Black-crowned Tchagra
Tchagra senegalus
Oro

Sings a sweet song from the top of a tree or bush



Black-backed Puffback
Dryoscopus cubla
Kathiyo-thiyo

Feeds on insects in trees. Its song announces that visitors are coming



Slate-coloured Boubou
Laniarius funebris

Sings from deep in bushes and thickets where it feeds on insects close to the ground



Tropical Boubou
Laniarius aethiopicus
Kubo-nyango

Male and female birds sing together so that it sounds like one song

Cuckooshrikes



Black Cuckooshrike
Campephaga flava

The male is blue-black in colour, the female is grey and yellow. They eat insects in trees

Shrikes



Northern White-crowned
Shrike
Eurocephalus rueppelli
Mbua

Often seen perched on top
of trees in dry areas



Red-backed Shrike
Lanius collurio
Kagonzi

This shrike is a sign of the
rainy season, as it migrates
to Europe and Asia in that
season



Long-tailed Fiscal
Lanius cabanisi
Bonobono

Shrikes and fiscals feed
on insects

Orioles



Eurasian Golden Oriole
Oriolus oriolus
Mutumwa wa Kolobilo

In March-April they migrate to Europe and Asia to nest, returning in October



African Golden Oriole
Oriolus auratus
Kolobilo

These orioles migrate within Africa, and are usually seen from March to September



Black-headed Oriole
Oriolus larvatus
Kolobilo ra kitswa-kiru

Sings in trees all year long; some people say it asks, "Where are your clothes?"

Drongos



Common (Fork-tailed)
Drongo
Dicrurus adsimilis
Mulamba

A common bird of forest and farms, driving away Black Kites and other birds of prey

Monarch Flycatchers



African Paradise
Flycatcher
Terpsiphone viridis
Kanyeri

The male when ready to nest grows beautiful long tail feathers. The male's feathers may be white or orange-brown in colour

Swallows and Martins



Barn Swallow
Hirundo rustica
**Katumbwirizi,
Katsungurizi,
Katsungwirizi**

The most common swallow from September to April; then they migrate north to nest



Lesser Striped Swallow
Hirundo abyssinica

Their short song sounds like a squeaking door or gate

Cisticolas and relatives



Coastal (Winding) Cisticola
Cisticola haematocephalus
Kasoso

Often found near water; when you weed the shamba, it sings, "the grass will defeat you!"



Tawny-flanked Prinia
Prinia subflava
Kadoso

Small birds of bush or farmland with a buzzing song



Grey-backed Camaroptera
Camaroptera brachyura
Katonono

Calls loudly but difficult to see

Bulbuls and Greenbuls



Common Bulbul
Pycnonotus barbatus
Kashore

Seen in farmland, bush
and forest edge



Zanzibar (Sombre)
Greenbul
Andropadus importunus
Kajawili

Sings all day from trees
and bushes



Yellow-bellied Greenbul
Chlorocichla flaviventris
Gorwa

The song sounds like a question or complaint, or a hard start for a car



Northern Brownbul
Phyllastrephus strepitans
Sherapala

Deep in the bushes, the Sherapala sound as if they are arguing or complaining



Eastern Nicator
Nicator gularis
Donats'aha

Its song includes explosive notes

Babblers and Chatterers



Scaly Babbler
Turdoides squamulata
Zhege-zhege

They live in groups, and call noisily to each other from deep in a bush

Starlings



Violet-backed Starling
Cinnyricinclus leucogaster
K'ozu Ngare-Ngare

Usually in flocks in fruiting trees; females are streaked brown and white in colour



Greater Blue-eared Starling
Lamprotornis chalybaeus
K'ozu Maamba

Seen in farmland, bush and forest edge



Black-bellied Starling
Lamprotornis corruscus
K'ozu

Lives in the forest, sings from the tops of trees

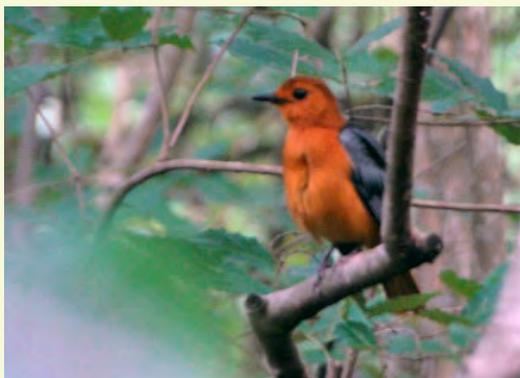
Thrushes



African Bare-eyed Thrush
Turdus tephronotus

Feeds on insects and other small prey on the ground

Chats and Flycatchers



Red-capped Robin Chat
Cossypha natalensis
Chuvi

In November this **Chuvi** flies to southern Africa to nest, returning in March



(Eastern) Bearded Scrub
Robin
Cercotrichas quadrivirgata
Chuvi

Sings sweetly at dawn and dusk and feeds on insects in the forest



Common Rock Thrush
Monticola saxatilis
Munona

This bird is a sign of rain, as it migrates from Europe or Asia during the rainy season



Pale Flycatcher
Bradornis pallidus
Kafula

Perches on a branch looking for insects to catch in the air or on the ground



Spotted Flycatcher
Muscicapa striata
Kacheche

In April this flycatcher flies to Europe and Asia to nest, returning in October

Sunbirds



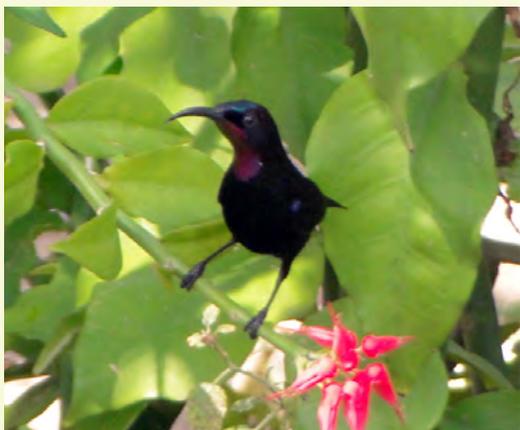
Mouse-coloured Sunbird
Cyanomitra veroxii
Kajema

Seen mainly in bushy areas near water; the similar Olive Sunbird, *Cyanomitra olivacea*, lives mainly in forest. Sunbirds feed on insects and nectar inside flowers



Collared Sunbird
Hedydipna collaris
Kasiyesiye

Both male and female are bright green and yellow. The male sings “kasiyesiye”



Amethyst Sunbird
Chalcomitra amethystina
Kajema-kozi

The female is pale brownish in colour with darker streaks

Weavers and relatives



Lesser Masked Weaver
Ploceus intermedius
Ts'ongo

Usually seen in flocks; males are yellow with a black face and yellow eyes; females yellowish-white



Village (Black-headed) Weaver
Ploceus cucullatus
Ts'ongo

Build their nests in tall trees in homesteads; the females are yellow-white in colour



Clarke's Weaver
Ploceus golangi
Ts'ongo

An Endangered bird found only in Kilifi County! It feeds on insects in **Mrihi** forest, and nests in small wetlands. We might call it **Ts'ongo-amrihini**



Red-headed Weaver
Anaplectes melanotis

Builds nests with long entrance tubes; females are grey in colour with red beaks



Red-billed Quelea
Quelea quelea
Ts'ongo-mustafu

These birds gather in big flocks and often feed on rice and millet

Waxbills and relatives



Common Waxbill
Estrilda astrild

Small birds that gather in flocks in grassland and bushy places near water



Red-cheeked Cordonbleu
Uraeginthus bengalus
Katsenzere

Small birds that feed on the ground near farms



Red-billed Firefinch
Lagonosticta senegala

Small birds that feed on the ground near farms



Bronze Mannikin
Spermestes cucullatus
Kasiji

The Black-and-white Mannikin, *Spermestes bicolor*, is a similar small bird, brighter in colour

Whydahs and Indigobirds



Pin-tailed Whydah
Vidua macroura
Kanyeri

Whydahs lay their eggs in the nests of other birds, who raise the young

Wagtails and Pipits



African Pied Wagtail
Motacilla aguimp

Often seen in homesteads and near water, where they feed on insects



Sokoke Pipit
Anthus sokokensis
Kabutha

An Endangered bird, it lives only in coastal forests; it feeds on insects on the ground

Canaries and Seedeaters



Yellow-fronted Canary
Serinus mozambicus
Kanangunangu

A small bird with a sweet song

2. BIRDS OF WETLANDS (RIVERS, DAMS AND SEASONAL POOLS)

Ducks and Geese Mabatha ga madzini



White-faced Whistling Duck
Dendrocygna viduata

Seen in flocks on ponds,
dams, swamps and marshes



Knob-billed Duck
Sarkidiornis melanotos

They come to ponds, dams and
swamps in the rainy season

Storks



African Open-billed Stork
Anastomus lamelligerus
Mario

Children sing to these birds when they see big flocks going round and round in the sky



Woolly-necked Stork
Ciconia episcopus

Pairs are often seen in small wetlands

Ibises



Sacred Ibis
Threskiornis aethiopicus

They were sacred birds for the ancient Egyptians



Hadada Ibis
Bostrychia hagedash
Ana ababa

They use their long curved beaks to find insects and worms in the ground

Hérons and Egrets Majawa, Majolojolo



Great White Egret
Ardea alba

Seen in swamps and marshes



Black-headed Heron
Ardea melanocephala
Jawa ra kitswa kiru

Found in swamps and marshes, also in grassland where it feeds on rats and snakes

Birds of Prey



African Fish Eagle
Haliaeetus vocifer
P'ungu

Found near water where it feeds on fish, and has a loud, beautiful song

Stilts



Black-winged Stilt
Himantopus himantopus

Feeds on the shallow shores of dams and ponds

Plovers



Spur-winged Plover
Vanellus spinosus

Seen near water

Jacanas



African Jacana
Actophilornis africanus
Kakuku-ziya

Walks on the floating plants in pools and swamps. Also called Kakulu wiri or Kakuku madzi

Sandpipers



Common Sandpiper
Actitis hypoleucos

In April this bird flies all the way to Europe or Asia to nest, and returns in September

Kingfishers



Malachite Kingfisher
Alcedo cristata
Muchelele, Kachelele zia

Lives near water

Weavers and relatives



Grosbeak Weaver
Amblyospiza albifrons
Ts'ongo-munandi

Builds a finely-woven nest in swamps and marshes, may feed in forest



Eastern (African) Golden Weaver
Ploceus subaureus
Ts'ongo

Build their nests in big groups called colonies on the banks of rivers, pools and dams



Golden Palm Weaver
Ploceus bojeri
Ts'ongo

Build their nests in big groups called colonies on the banks of rivers, pools and dams



Zanzibar Red Bishop
Euplectes nigroventris
Tsetse

Tiny birds of marshes and swamps; the females are dark and light brown in colour

3. BIRDS SEEN MOSTLY IN URBAN AREAS



Black Kite
Milvus migrans
Mwee

Lives in towns where it feeds on waste food, sometimes catches chicks



House Crow
Corvus splendens
Kunguru

These small, dark crows came from India and live in towns where they feed on rubbish



Pied Crow
Corvus albus
Ngongowa

Crows are intelligent birds and their young ones learn from the adults



House Sparrow
Passer domesticus

These small birds live in towns and trading centres



Feral (domestic) Pigeon
Columba livia
Giya ra midzini

People feed the pigeons that live in towns such as Marafa

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Flock of Clarke's Weavers with one Lesser Masked Weaver.
Photo by Julio Mwambire

Dakatcha Woodland, Magarini sub-County, Kilifi County, is the home of rare and beautiful birds. These birds include Clarke's Weaver, found only in Kilifi County – nowhere else in the world. Meet the birds of Dakatcha in this book, written and photographed by the people of Kilifi County and their colleagues.

