



WORLD OTTER DAY 31/5/2017 – Ruvuma Region, Tanzania

International Otter Survival Fund Action (IOSF)

Sponsored by: African Otter Network and IOSF

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all, I would like to thank AON for funding and materials. Secondly, I thank Mr. Richard Bwire (Project manager of Liparamba Game Reserve) for allowing me to travel to Lake Nyasa for raising awareness in Ng'ombo Primary and Nyasa Secondary School. Thirdly I thank Carol Bennetto for her tireless effort in helping me on preparing educational materials and advice. Lastly, I thank the IOSF for all supports they have always giving me.

INTRODUCTION

Nyasa is a District in Ruvuma Region where Lake Nyasa lies within the Region and used as the border between Malawi and Tanzania. The people from Lake Nyasa mostly depends on fishing activities and growing rice and cassava as economic activities. Lake Nyasa is believed to be a good home for Otters, there are many rocks along the beaches which offer the habitat for Otter to live and hide.

THE AIM OF VISITING SCHOOLS.

World Otter Day aimed to spread positive word for Otter all over the World to make many people aware of the presence of Otters and their contribution to healthy environments.

I started the journey on 30/5/2017 morning and headed to Nyasa District for creating awareness to Students. It almost 62 km from Mbinga town, and it took 4:30 hours to reach Ng'ombo by bus and Land rover and as it is rough road. The aim was to visit two schools found in the shore of Lake Nyasa to persuade them about the role played by Otters in Ecology and the way to preserve them in their natural habitat.

RESULTS

I managed to talk with 180 students and 3 teachers in Nyasa Secondary Schools and 49 students in Ng'ombo Primary Schools. I prepared gift by putting Otter sticker outside the Exercise books, and other materials brought by Jan Reed-Smith from AON including crayons, pencils, colored pens, otter coloring books with a Swahili story, and exercise books.

Ng'ombo Primary Secondary with S 11°27.164' E 034°56.358 and Elevation of 503m the students enjoyed the lesson where I taught them about the importance of conserving the environment and protecting Otters. During the World Otter Day activities, the students participated in drawing Otter pictures together with asking various questions about Otters and conservation and the winners got Gifts. The students were very interested in drawing Otters and it was a challenge to pick up the



winners. I divided them into groups of 7 students and give them the word-finding puzzle created by Carol Bennetto of AON and the IUCN/SSC Otter Specialist Group.

I got three winners who did best in drawing Otter pictures but were only boys and I suggested to select one girl who tried to draw. The winners were John Mapunda, Aizaki Malifedha, Ayubu, Amos Chiwinga and Anna Domian.

In Nyasa Secondary School, S 11°25.205' E 034°56.900' and Elevation of 537m I spoke with students about why Otter are Key species in healthy environment, the ways to protect them with their habitat and talked with them about the beliefs that make the species to disappear in the planet. I asked them various question about Conservation and give them a chance to ask questions about Otter and species found in Tanzania, Africa, as well as in the World. We talked about the problems facing Otters such as habitat destruction, water pollution, road accidents, inadequate information, misunderstanding of otter behavior (such as otters have a hook in their mouth that helps them catch fish) and killing for bush meat or furtrade.

I also talked to three fishermen along Ng'ombo beach where the people gathered to sell and buy fish (S 11°25.205' E 034°56.900'), the fishermen claimed to see Otter in their place and tell a story that a spotted necked Otter usually use his tail to catch crabs in water by immersing his tail into water and the crabs grasp fur then remove the tail and pull the crabs out of water for feeding.

RECOMMENDATION

I recommend regularly visit in other schools in shore of lake Nyasa so as many people could know the importance of protecting Otter in their habitat, If possible to start the football league for Fishermen to compete may be for Goat and District Natural Resource Officer to be an honorable guest, hope this will create awareness to manypeople.

CHALLENGES

Sometime it is a challenge to change the perceptions of people toward Otters, the perception heritage from their grandfathers and grandmothers, needs time and regular visitation top explain tradition compared to science and ecology.

The road is rough so it took so much time in travelling. After talking with students during evening I went to beaches and talked with fishermen but it was difficult to get many fishermen gathered but I managed to speak with Leader of fishermen in Ng'ombo(Mr.Ligola)

CONCLUSION

The work went well, the students and teachers liked the lesson and asked to be visited continuously so as many students could know the Importance of Otter in Ecology. Also, they promised to be the good ambassadors of Otter.

Photos from World Otter Day 2017 follow.



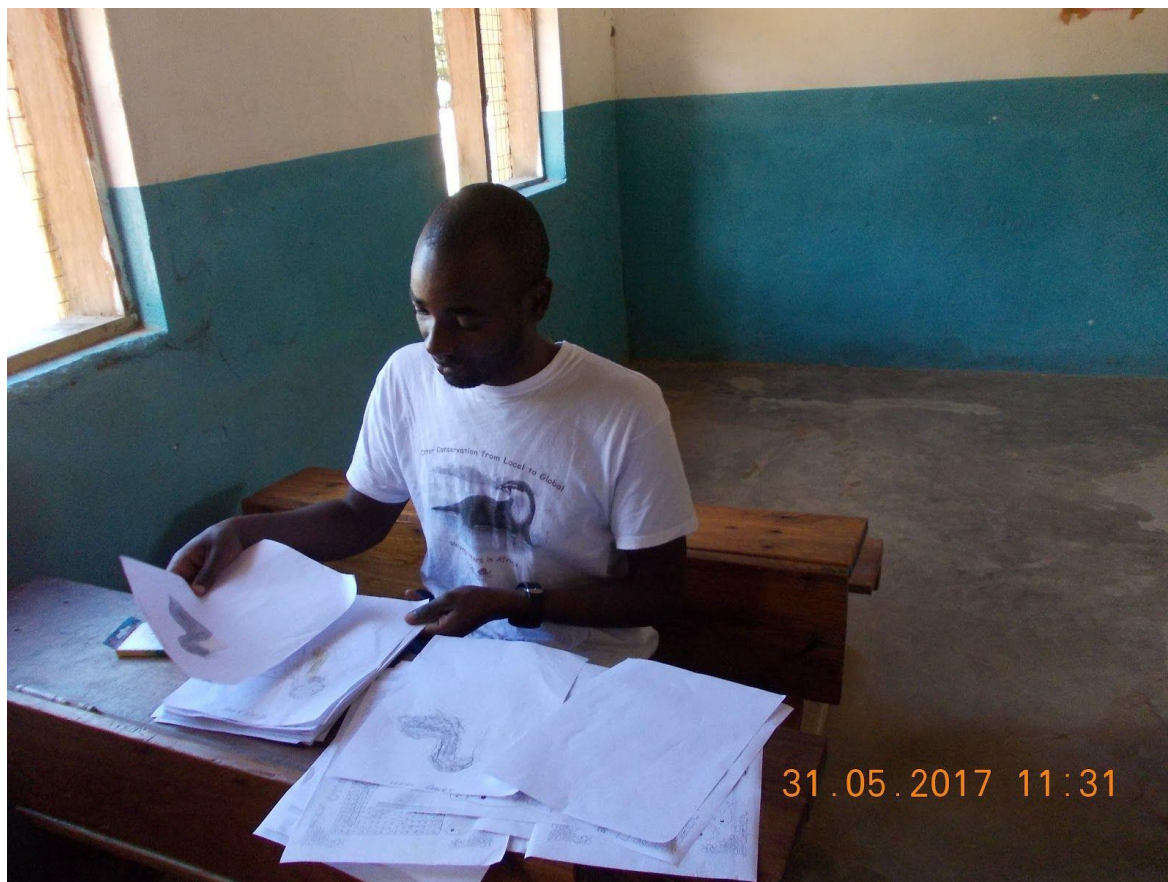














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