

ZACC Sponsored Rubondo Island National Park Visits for Mwanza Roots & Shoots Clubs - May 2011

AoTOP & Roots & Shoots, Mwanza, Tanzania



PHOTOS BY STUDENTS AND ORGANIZERS

*THE AFRICAN OTTER OUTREACH PROJECT (AoTOP) AND MWANZA DISTRICT ROOTS & SHOOTS CLUBS THANK **ZACC** AND THE **WOODLAND PARK ZOO** FOR SPONSORING THE FIRST FIELD TRIP FOR THE ROOTS AND SHOOTS PARTICIPANTS IN MWANZA DISTRICT, TANZANIA (MAY 20 - 24, 2011).*

WITH YOUR GENEROUS DONATION, 15 STUDENTS, 4 TEACHERS, AND THE DISTRICT COORDINATOR WERE ABLE TO GO ON OUR FIRST FIELD EXPERIENCE TO A NATIONAL PARK, RUBONDO ISLAND, LOCATED IN THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF LAKE VICTORIA.

TRIP PREPARATION

Mussa Mashishanga (Roots & Shoots Coordinator for Mwanza) and Hobokela Mwamjengwa (Outreach Warden, Rubondo Island National Park) planned the 3 night/4 day trip for outstanding members of the Mwanza area Roots & Shoots Clubs. The RINP Youth Hostel can accommodate 20 people; for this reason 15 students and 5 teachers were provided an opportunity to participate in this trip.

PARTICIPANT SELECTION

All club members interested in participating in this opportunity were required to write an essay about what they anticipated learning, and how they would make use of what they learned after returning to school. The interest in participating in this opportunity was great and competition was keen to win a spot on the trip. A sample of the essays submitted has been submitted along with this report.

Currently there are 8 Roots & Shoots Clubs in Mwanza. These are:

- Bwiru Girls Secondary School
- Nganza Girls Secondary School
- Ibinza Mixed Secondary School
- Nyamagana Mixed Secondary School
- Kahama Primary School
- Nyamadoke Primary School
- Mtakuja Primary School
- Jeshini Primary School

To facilitate the selection process it was decided by the organizers that the first trip would be open to those clubs that had been formed the longest. These were Bwiru Girls, Nganza Girls, Kahama, Mtakuja, and Nyamadoke. Additionally, one of the founding members from the Children's Health and Environment Caretakers (CHEC,) who also is a student at Nganza, was selected to participate in this trip.

The second trip, planned for September 2011, will be open to the other Mwanza clubs and some of the newly formed clubs in Geita (8 clubs formed in late 2010) and Sengerema (8 clubs formed in late 2010) which are important smaller towns on and near the shore of Lake Victoria.

The participants in the May 2011 Rubondo Island field trip were:

Students

Evelyne Paula
Neema Fasto
Philomena Bassu

Dorice Raphael
Amina Janani
Niwael Likus
Juliana Samson

Anthonia Paulo
Prisca Madoshi
Salome Benjamini
Robert Maro
Kulwa Pastori
Venanse Pasten
Elisha Samwel

Hellen Simone

Teachers
Amifa Abedi
Salome Deus
Pheube Malle
John Makala

Roots & Shoots
Mussa Mashishanga

PREPARATION

Mussa Mashishanga (club coordinator) and Ms. Pheube Malle (Matron of Mtakuja Primary School club) took care of preliminary supply shopping in Mwanza. Shopping for produce was carried out by the entire group once they reached Mganza on the shore of Lake Victoria where the park boat met them. During the week prior to the trip Mashishanga and AoTOP Director, Jan Reed-Smith visited with 4 of the schools to meet with the head teachers and make final arrangements for the trip. These arrangements included getting written approval from the District Education Officer for the students at government boarding schools to participate and written permission from the parents of these students.

THE TRIP

The trip began with the group meeting in Mwanza at the bus company's departure point. The trip by bus to Mganza takes roughly 5 hours. This went well, after a small glitch. At the ferry dock it took so long for purchase of the tickets for the group that the ferry left, with the bus on it. This was promptly dealt with by Mashishanga who got the bus stopped on the other side of the bay where it waited for the group to come on the next ferry. To say the least, this was an exciting start for their big adventure. The rest of the trip went well, but was long. Once in Mganza the group did their shopping, met with the Rubondo NP staff, and finally boarded their boats for the 25 minute ride across to the island. From their island arrival point, the western ranger station Mlaga, they were driven to the eastern side of the island where dinner was waiting for them at the Kageye Youth Hostel. It was a long day for all, but one filled with laughter and new experiences.

ACTIVITY SUMMARY

The students were given presentations by Hobokela Mwamjengwa on Rubondo Island NP, its history and biological diversity. Additionally, Hobokela spoke to the students about Tanzania's national park system, its variety, and importance to the country and conservation of Tanzania's wildlife heritage. Jan Reed-Smith presented information on the otters, their natural history and the process of doing field work. Mussa Mashishanga presented the Roots & Shoots program and gave the students a more detailed overview of the purpose and goals of the overall program.

Interspersed with classroom presentations were walks to view some of the island's habitats and wildlife. These included walks to the Maji Matakati Bay, Pongo viewpoint and the island's forest, as well as a walk through the forest to visit the tourist camp north of the Kageye Ranger village. Prior and during these walks the group was accompanied by TANAPA rangers who explained some of the flora and fauna seen which included bush buck, vervet monkey, hippopotamus, numerous birds species, insects, and lizards.

Students were each provided with a pair of binoculars to use while on the island. This was a big hit as was the opportunity to use a camera provided by AoTOP which allowed students to document their whole adventure. Additional activities included playing the Clean Water game and watching BBC wildlife videos donated by a grant from the Phoenix Zoo. Of course, the kids and teachers also were provided with time to relax and explore some of the area surrounding the Kageye camp.

On the final day a short quiz was given the students with a prize awarded for the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place (15,000 Tsh; 10,000 Tsh; 5,000 Tsh) overall finishers and a 1st place award of 10,000 Tsh for the 1st place primary school student. Due to their facility with English and knowledge of conservation the secondary school students retained the information shared with them better (results ranged from 48% to 80%). The highest placing primary school student scored 44%. The financial awards were donated by AoTOP. The winning students were:

1st place: Neema Festo



2nd place: Amina Janani



3rd place: Evelyne Paula



1st place primary school: Venance Pastory



DAY 2 - 1ST VISIT TO THE EASTERN SHORE OF RUBONDO





DAY 3 - WALKS AND CLASSROOM



DAY 4 - LEAVING THE ISLAND



TRIP SUMMARY AND THANK YOU

The clubs had a terrific time, built memories that will last a life time, and learned a great deal about what Lake Victoria looked like. Each of the students are required to write a report on their field experience. Sample of these will be provided in a second short report. The best way to express our thanks is in photos.

CLUB PRESIDENTS





*THANK YOU ZACC AND WOODLAND PARK ZOO FOR
GIVING US THE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT RUBONDO ISLAND
NATIONAL PARK!*