WaterLovers

Beach Resort

The Environement

Introduction

This booklet has been written in order for you to enjoy your visit to WaterLovers area. The information is merely a glimpse into the wonderful environment in Diani Beach. We hope that it will increase your pleasure and may entice you to learn more …

We have covered only a few of the trees, flowers, animals, birds and marine life, but do keep an eye for all the insects, butterflies, lizards and crabs which inhabit the resort grounds and seashore.

As a background, during the construction of WaterLovers no plant or tree was cut and buildings were moved according to the flora. As a result, we still have 2 families of Colobus monkeys living in our plot, and more and more wildlife, especially birds, return to the site to live.

We ask you to respect the environment. You will find monkey in the hotel grounds. Please respect their habitat and never feed them. We do hope that you use the book to wander around the grounds, the beach and the ocean and identify the flora and fauna surrounding WaterLovers.

Primates

There are four species of diurnal primates: the Angolan black-and-white colobus, the yellow baboon, the vervet monkey, and the sykes monkey as well as two species of nocturnal primate, the thick-tailed bush baby and lesser bush baby.

The Angolan black and white Colobus Monkey

We have two families of Colobus monkey living our grounds. They have black hair with a white brow band, cheeks, and throat. Long haired white epaulettes stream from the shoulders. The lower part of the tail is white as is the band (males have a band , females have a patch) on the buttocks. This subspecies can only be found in the southern Kenyan coastal forests and the northern Tanzanian highlands. Diani has the highest concentration of the Angolan Colobus in Kenya.

The Colobus monkey is diurnal, eat mostly leaves (and some fruits and flowers) and are arboreal (live in the tree canopy and rarely come down to the ground). Additionally, the Colobus have no thumbs though they retain an opposable big toe. "Colobus" in fact acquired their name from the Greek word "kolobos" meaning maimed or mutilated. The reduction of the thumb is an adaptation to arboreal living as the fingers have become aligned into a single, narrow curved arc that allows the hand to act as a flexible hook. Their stomach is large and has three chambers, which carries specific bacteria that helps to ferment and digest leaves, similar to rumination of, for example, cows. Because of the poor nutritional quality of their food, they browse intensively for many hours each day. They digest two to three kg of leaves per day (one third of their full body weight), and also eat seeds, unripe fruits and flowers.

Primates

Colobine infants are known for their flamboyant coloration, which is remarkably different than the adult. This is considered an adaptation for encouraging 'aunting behaviour' where other females in the group are attracted to the newborn and spend time caring for the young. This supposedly frees up maternal time for feeding. As is known amongst the Colobines, the nutritional value to their diet is low and the stresses of rearing offspring puts enormous pressure on the female. Aunting behaviour thus counteracts the burden of nursing. Females remain in their natal troops for life. The dominant male defends the territory and troop from predators whereas the dominant female leads the troop. Young males leave their natal troop to start bachelor groups or to travel alone until they are able to take over their own troop.

THE COLOBUS TRUST

If you want to know more about these wonderful primates, you can visit the Colobus Trust in Diani.

The Colobus Trust is a conservation organization designed to promote the conservation, preservation and protection of primates like the rare Angolan Colobus monkey (Colobus angolensis palliatus) and its coastal forest habitat in southern Kenya. The Trust was established in 1997 in response to an outcry from local residents about the high number of deaths of the Colobus in the Diani area. Now the Trust has numerous projects concerning the wildlife and the citizens of Kenya, including animal welfare, biological/ecological research, community development and education, forest protection and enrichment and eco-tourism awareness programs

Primates

The Vervet Monkeys (Cercopithecus aethiops)

The Vervet monkey are the most common monkeys found in Africa. The Vervet (also known as the "African green monkey") is a grey-brown monkey with white under parts, white fringed black face, white brow, black feet and black tip of the tail. Males posses a blue scrotum. Vervet are omnivorous, opportunistic feeders eating fruit, seeds, roots, flowers, insects, small vertebrates and eggs. Vervet are equally at home on the ground and on the trees.

Complex communication among Vervets has been documents for some time, with characteristic and different calls being contextual for different sorts of situations and eliciting different responses in return. For example, alarm calls for aerial predators differ from alarm calls for snakes requiring the vervets on the area to look in different places to triangulate the danger.

The Sykes Monkeys (Cercopithecus albogularis)

Sykes monkeys are widely distributed on the Kenyan coast and are a common sight in Diani. Their colour is largely grey, with a blackish tail, limbs and shoulders, and a distinctive flecked chestnut back and face. They have a white chin and throat and a white ruff which extends part of the way around the neck. The forehead hairs point forward, creating a yet more distinctive look. They are omnivorous, although their main food is leaves, shoots, flowers, fruits and berries.

They also feed on other food like human food - for which they are notorious thieves. They are territorial and live in female bonded, single-male troops (averaging 20 individuals in Diani). Sometimes the Sykesassociate with the colobus, playing with each other. It is thought that the colobus tolerate the Sykes because they are extremely vigilant and are usually first to notice any danger.

Primates

The Yellow Baboons (Papio cynocephalus)

The Yellow baboon is a mainly terrestrial, coastal baboon with yellow-brown hair, a prominent muzzle, naked face and close-set, amber-coloured eyes. They back legs are shorter then their front legs, giving them a characteristic backward sloping stance - and they often climb trees for food and as a place to sleep. They walk on their fingers and the soles of their feet. A mature male baboon has an imposing sight, weighing 20-30 kg and a head-body length of 70 cm. Males are approximately twice the size and weight of females. They naturally eat roots, grasses, flowers, fruits and leaves - as well as insects, rodents, and birds. In Diani their diet extends to human food and they are notorious raiders of crops and garbage. They live in complex social societies made up of multi-male and multi-female troops, ranging from 10 to 200 individuals. Baboons are extremely noisy creatures, communicating through an array of sounds accompanied by gestures and postures. They are known in Diani to make loud displays.

Bush Babies (Galago senegalensis and Otolemur crassicaudatus)

Bush babies are small, nocturnal animals with very large eyes and excellent senses of hearing and smell. They have mobile ears and long bush tails. They have extremely delicate fingers and extreme gripping power by pads on their fingers and toes - although on the ground their locomotion more resembles the kangaroo, jumping and pausing to look around. Bush babies diet comprises insects, small reptiles, plant products and fruit. They are extremely social creatures and enjoy frequent interactions among each other. At night they make a distinctive sound, like a laugh, which you can easily hear at WaterLovers.

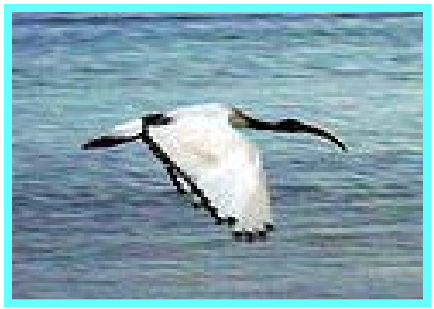
Birds

Grey Heron (Ardea cinerea)

The Herons are birds of the water's edge, with long bills, legs and neck. They fly with the neck drawn in and usually catch their prey by stealth or ambush. The grey heron's length is approximately 100 cm; it is tall, grey with white neck and black stripe through eye. The bill colour varies from greyish-yellow to orange. The grey heron is usually solitary, loves the shoreline and you can typically see it in front of WaterLovers during low tide.

African Fish Eagle (Haliaeetus vocifer)

The African fish eagle's length is about 83 cm; the adult has a distinctive black and white plumage. It has a characteristic loud ringing "weee-ah, hyo-hyo-hyo" uttered with the head thrown back. It feeds on fish or squid it catches with its powerful talons. Often nests in large trees such as baobas and you can easly see in the Ocean in front of WaterLovers coming back to the bush with its prey.



African Sacred Ibis (Threskiornis aethiopicus)

The African Sacred Ibis is a species of wading birdof the ibis family. The bird nests in tree colonies, often with other large wading birds such as herons. It builds a stick nest often in a baobab and lays 2-3 eggs. It feeds on various fish, frogs, small mammals, reptiles, smaller birds and insects. An adult individual is 68 cm long with all-white body plumage apart from dark plumes on the rump. The bald head and neck, thick curved bill and legs are black. The white wings show a black rear border in flight.

Birds

Great Egret (Casmerodius albus)

The great egret's length is about 90 cm and can weigh up to 950 g. It is a very large egret, similar in size to a grey heron. All white with blackish legs and feet; the long bill is usually yellow and it has a slow flight, with its neck retracted. Usually solitary, or in small groups, is typical habitat is the shoreline.

Herring

Black-headed

Lesseer Black-backed

Sooty

Gulls These scavenging shore birds have long wings, short legs with webbed feet and heavy hooked bills. You can see many species on Diani beach. The Herring Gull: its length can reach 61 cm, it is a large gull with grey black and yellow beak; the legs may be pinkish or yellowish. This migrant bird is present especially from November to April. The Black-headed Gull has a length of 40 cm; it has red legs, black-tipped red beak and dark grey spots behind the eye. Most abundant in December-April. The Lesser Black-backed Gull resembles the herring but it is very dark, almost black, on mantle and wings, present mainly October-April. The Sooty Gull is a medium-sized, dark gull with blackish head and red eyes. This is the most common gull of East Africa coast.

Reptiles

The Savannah Monitor Lizard (Varanus exanthematicus)

The Savannah Monitor can weigh five to five and a half kilogram and its average length is of approximately 1 to 1.5 meters. It has small scales in the cranial region, larger abdominal scales, and keeled scales on the caudal area. The body is gray to brown, with alternating yellow and brown rings on the tail. The front legs have extremely sharp claws which are used for digging, while the longer rear legs are more fitted for running. This lizard has a blue snake-like tongue and a head that can turn in all directions.

The Savannah Monitor is diurnal and is most active in warm sunshine. During periods of drought or cool weather, it becomes dormant. We do have some small to medium size lizards at WaterLovers but since this is a shy animal, they avoid you.

The Chameleon

These colorful lizards are known for their ability to change their colour, their long sticky tongue, and for their eyes, which can be moved independently of each other. Chameleons spend their lives in the trees and bushes. The chameleon's five toes are zygodactylous so they can grasp branches just like our thumbs and fingers can grasp objects. The chameleon's tail also helps with life up high: most have a prehensile tail that can wrap around tree branches while climbing.

Chameleons don't change colour to match their surroundings, and they cannot change to any colour. Each species has a group of colours that it is able to display; some of these patterns are designed for camouflage. The skin colour changes under the influence of the lizard's mood, such as fear, the amount of light, the temperature or humidity. The changing skin colour also plays an important role in communication among males

Marine Life - Whales

Diani offers a vast fringing, coral reef along the length of its coast attracting reef sharks, turtles, dolphins and even whales. Once you get into the water there is plenty of life. Hard corals are the basis of the reef structure, with lots of small fish, nudibranchs and crustaceans hanging around. Out of the reed you can also see whales.

Humpback Whale (Megaptera novaengliae)

Always seen on a seasonal basis between July to October. They are the most acrobatic of all whale species and are often seen breaching (lunging out of the water). These magnificent gentle giants are on their migratory path heading south. A mother calling her calf can be heard for miles in underwater! They have rounded body, massive head with protuberances. Dark grey to black. Characteristic humped back and tail flukes visible when diving.

Short Finned Pilot Whale (Globicephala macrorhyncus)

This whale is black or dark grey with a grey or white cape. It has grey or almost white patches on its belly and throat and a grey or white tripe which goes diagonally upwards from behind each eye. Its head is bulbous and this can become more defined in older males. It has flukes with sharply pointed tips, a distinct notch in the middle and concave edges. Can be confused with false killer whale.

Marine Life - Dolphins

Dolphins - Dolphins eat at least 9kgs of fish every day and thus need to live near a good supply of food and spend 75% of the time looking for it. They swim in small social groups known as pods, usually 10-25 members. Mothers with calves swim near the centre of the pod. Dolphins within the same pod communicate using a series of groans and whistles. They primarily eat fish but also octopus, crustaceans and shrimps. The only function of their teeth is to catch slippery lively prey before it is swallowed. They find their prey using echolocation (clicking sounds that echo back) and use high pitched pulses of sound to confuse them. Mating occurs seasonally and is promiscuous: many males attempt to mate with one female. The gestation period is 10-12 months during which time the female chooses a 'midwife'. The young suckle for 14 months, and are ready to eat fish after 3 months.

Indo-Pacific Humpback

Spotted

Common

Spinner

Indian Ocean Bottlenose

The Indo-Pacific Humpback has a distinctive characteristic, thickened ridge on middle of back with a small, pointed dorsal fin. They are shy, stay close to the shoreline and around mangroves and are seen less often. The Spotted has a curved dorsal fin and long, dark beak with white lips. Body dark grey with numerous white spots. Very common in the area of the Kisite National Park. The Common has black body on the back from beak to midway between dorsal fin and flukes, with distinctive hour-glass pattern of yellow and grey on flanks. Known for riding waves of boats. The Spinner has a grey upper body, pale grey to white underneath, and a dark patch encircling the eye which extends to the to the tip of beak. Called spinner as it leaps and spins out of the water. The Indian Ocean Bottlenose is largest of the dolphins. Its body is grey above, with white belly, paler but spotted underside and thick head. It’s the most playful of dolphin families and often approaches divers.

Marine Life

Whale Shark (Rhincodon typus)

The Kenyan coast is among the worlds best locations for whale shark encounters. These gentle giants roam the worlds sub-tropical oceans in search of plankton rich waters. The largest species of fish, they can reach lengths of up to 12-17 meters and weigh up to 13 tonnes. The upper side body is dark with conspicuous patterning of white spots and bars; below the body is white. They have small eyes, set on edge of head towards the enormous, toothless mouth. They feed only on plankton. A good time for sightings in South Coast are the months of Sept/Oct and Jan /Feb.

Green Turtle (Chelonia mydas)

This turtle can reach a length of 140 cm and weigh 120-208 kg. It has 4 pairs of costal plates and 12 pairs of marginal plates. The carapace is smooth with very thin plates which do not overlap. Colour of the adult carapace varies from dark brown or black to greenish-brown; plastron varies from off-white to yellow; head shields dark, varying from black to reddish brown. This turtle is largely herbivorous, feeding on sea grasses, and are therefore found in relatively shallow water. You can easily see them just outside the reef. Below some pictures of Riccardo during the rescue of a turtle caught in a fisherman's net.

Marine Life – Coral reef fish

Yellow Boxfish (Ostracion cubicus)

This funny fish, box shaped, can reach a length of 42 cm; It has convex snout with bump above mouth. It has a yellowish body with blue markings. It lives on the coral reef and feeds on invertebrates and sponges

Two-bar Anemonefish (Amphiprion allardi)

Its length is 10 cm. It has blunt snout, black with white bar on head and on flank, white tail and orange-yellow patches around mouth, pectoral fin and anal fin. It shelters among sean anemones, to whose stings it's immune.

Emperor Angelfish (Pomacanthus imperator)

This wonderful angelfish is purple with longitudinal yellow stripes; the dorsal and caudal fins are yellow, the anal fin is purple with blue margin. It has white snout, blue-edged black eye-stripe and black patch from above pectoral fin to belly. Its length is about 40 cm. It lives in coral reef and feeds mostly on sponges

Moorish Idol (Zanclus cornutus)

This coral reef fish, length to 25 cm, has a short projection on forehead; black with white stripes and yellow blotch from dorsal fin to anal fin. This very elegant fish is omnivorous, grazing on algae and sponges.

Marine Life – Large oceanic fish

Black Marlin (Makaira indica)

This oceanic fish can reach a length of 5 mt. It has a streamlined body with steep forehead; it's darker above and light below. It has a large, sickle-shaped tail. It feeds on pelagic fish and squid.

Sailfish (Istiophorus platypterus)

With a length of 360 cm, this large oceanic fish is similar to the marlin but has longer spike and a conspicous, large, iridescent, spotted dorsal fin. The color of the body is bluish. It leaves along the coast and feeds on squid and fish such as tuna and anchoives.

Yellowfin Tuna (Thunnus albacares)

With a length up to 210 cm, this tuna has a large, robust, barrel-shaped body; it is bluish-black dorsally, whitish on the belly with about 20 pale, thin, vertical stripes. It has large eyes with conspicuous yellow anal and rear dorsal fins.

Swordfish (Xiphias gladius)

The sword can reach a length of 4.5 mt. It has a blackish-brown back and light flanks and belly. It has no teeth in jaws and no pectoral fins. Sometimes also in coastal waters, it feeds on fish, often stunning them with its bill.

Marine Life – Mollusca

Bull-mouth Helmet (Cypraecassis rufa)

This is a conspicuous, solid, thick, heavy shell, up to 17 cm, with a narrow aperture. It is dorsally reddish, with 3 or 4 broad spiral bands bearing rounded nodules. The outher lip is light orange with strong lighter teeth. It is an important predator of sea urchins.

Chicoreus Ramosus

This very rugged shell, up to 12 cm, has heavy spined varices on whorls. The colour is off-white to light brown and the aperture is white with rose pink on inner edge of crenulate outer lip.

True Harp (Harpa harpa)

This shell, up to 8 cm, has 12 axial ribs. Its colour is creamy brown crossed with thin, dark brown bands. The columella is cream with dark brown blotches. The aperture is white with brown markings on lip

Giant Clams (Tridacnidae)

These large, heavy shells have clear radiating ribs and interlocking scalloped edges. Muscles are arranged at the posterior allowing a large amount of colourful mantle tissue to be exposed. Fossil shells can be found especially in coral limestone quarries and you have examples around WaterLovers.

Trees and Plants

Baobab (Adansonia digitata)

Truly a tree that represents Africa, this striking deciduous tree of immense girth grows up to 25 meters in height. It is bare of leaves up to 9 months of the year, leaving immense bare branches, earning the baobab the nick-name "the upside down tree". Despite its soft, pithy wood, it is one of the longest lived trees in the world. Carbon dating has shown trees 5m wide to be 1000 years old and the largest to be about 3000 years old. The bark is grey, smooth and fibrous, often pock-marked and heavily folded. Leaves are compound, dark green and shiny. The solitary flowers have 5 waxy petals surrounding a ball of fine stamens; they hang upside down on hanging stalks and are unpleasantly scented. Fruits are large, hard-shelled capsules up to 24 cm long which remain on the tree after ripening. Their leaves are a favourite of the colobus, and their fruit is eaten by other monkeys, though only the baboon can crack them open . In the centre of WaterLovers ground you can see a wonderful baobab.

Neem tree (Azadracta indica)

This tree is common on the coast, though it is not indigenous to Africa. It is a hardy tree which grows up to 118 meters. It has a rough, pale brown-grey bark, small, glossy-green compounded leaves, small white or cream-coloured fragrant flowers and small oval, greenish-yellow berries. It is widely planted on the coast for fuel, timber, shade, agro forestry in exhausted soils, and as traditional medicine for treating 40 diseases, including malaria. It is also used for soap making. Colobus like to eat its leaves while its berries are a favourite for sykes and vervets.

Trees and Plants

Flamboyant (Delonix regia)

Another exotic plant found in Diani and a favourite of the colobus monkeys. It is one of the most beautiful trees, particularly when it flowers; each brilliant scarlet-red flower reaches up to 10cm across with wavy petals, of which the uppermost is creamy white and splashed with scarlet. It has a flat or umbrella shaped crown; its bark is grey and smooth; its leaves are light green and feathery, with leaflets mostly less than 1 cm long. The fruits are long, brown, heavy pods honeycombed into horizontal seed chambers. These seed pods are also favoured by baboons and sykes. Vervets also eat them. You can see many flamboyants at WaterLovers around the Villa area, where usually Colobus eat and rest.

Casuarina (Casuarina equisetifolia)

The Casuarina Tree is a very striking and graceful tree that grows throughout the coast of Diani Beach. While the Casuarina resembles a long needled pine tree it not actually a pine but instead is a type of ironwood. This cone-shaped, branching tree can be 7-30 m tall with grey or brown bark. It is considered a very valuable tree throughout the world. The wood makes an excellent source of firewood. The wood is also good for construction materials and for roofing and tools. The Casurina Tree is a very hardy tree and is useful in protecting shorelines; it can withstand waves better than coconut and a forest of Casuarina can provide quite a bit of protection. Casuarina has been used in the construction of WaterLovers for the supporting poles of the cottages and the villa.

Trees and Plants

Coconut Palm (Cocos nucifera)

This well-known palm is a typical shore plant as being able to exist in highly saline soils and grow on sandy beaches. The coconut tree is a palm that can grow to 30 m, depending on variety. Leaves are pinnate, 4-5 m long, confined to trunk apex forming a characteristic crown. Diani beach is full of coconut palm but this tree is not native of this area. It was imported during the English Colony for plantation, as it is one of the most useful trees in the world. In fact, all parts of the tree can be utilised: fronds for baskets, brooms, mates and roof (the typical "makuti" roofing you see at WaterLovers); stem for timber and fuel wood, even tough this is a soft wood; nuts for drink and oil and shells for ornaments, spoons and bowls.

Frangipani (Plumeria)

Frangipanis has romantic fragrance and a choice of beautiful warm tropical colours. For centuries frangipani has been one of the great plants for human adornment. The early uses of frangipani have been recorded by the ancient Aztecs. Native to Mexico and Central America and Venezuela which has then spread to all tropical areas of the world. Frangipani was the name of an Italian perfume used to scent gloves in the 16th century and named after its creator, Marquis Frangipani. When the flower was discovered, its natural perfume reminded people of the scented gloves and so the flower was called Frangipani. The frangipani flower is propeller shaped with a delicate yellow centre melting into the creamy white outer petals. The umbel like clusters of frangipani flowers at the end of terminal branches open over several weeks and each day the ground is carpeted with fresh frangipani flowers. You can see a nice frangipani between Hippo and Giraffe cottages.

Trees and Plants

Aloes

The Aloe is native to Africa; there are over 300 different aloes, the most common and well known of these is Aloe vera. Most Aloe species have a rosette of large, thick, fleshy leaves. The leaves are often lance-shaped with a sharp apex and a spiny margin. Aloe flowers are tubular, frequently yellow, pink or red and are borne on densely clustered, simple or branched leafless stems. Aloe species are frequently cultivated as ornamental plants both in gardens and in pots. Aloe vera is used both internally and externally on humans, and is claimed to have some medicinal effects, which have been supported by scientific and medical research. The gel in the leaves can be made into a smooth type of cream that can heal burns such as sunburn. They can also be made into types of special soaps.

Bougainvillea

Bougainvillea is a genus of flowering plants native to South America; a very popular ornamental plant in most area with warm climates. They are thorny, woody vines growing anywhere from 1-12 meters tall, scrambling over other plants with their hooked thorns. The thorns are tipped with a black, waxy substance. The leaves are alternate, simple ovate-acuminate, 4-13 cm long and 2-6 cm broad. The actual flower of the plant is small and generally white, but each cluster of three flowers is surrounded by three or six bracts with the bright colors associated with the plant, including pink, magenta, purple, red, orange, white, or yellow. Bougainvillea has a high salt tolerance, which makes it a natural choice for color on coastal regions. As a woody clambering vine, bougainvillea will stand alone and can be pruned into a standard, but it is perfect along fence lines, on walls, in containers and hanging baskets.

WaterLovers

Beach Resort

Thank you…