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Bequest Report**

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The 'Colobus Cottage', where I was based, was set in the most idyllic location that I could ever have imagined. The Cottage itself was basic, but comfortable, with a veranda looking out on to the Indian Ocean. The coast was fringed by a coral reef and the sands seemed to go on for miles.

The activities I undertook were varied and numerous. Anything from administration to post-mortems and maintenance of the cottage itself.

My first assignment was dealing with the 'Colobus Update'. This is a newsletter spasmodically produced by the volunteers and sent to Tourists that visit the trust, Professors at universities, the Diani Residents and scores of other interested individuals. It tells the story of the Colobus (*Colobus angolensis*), the threats endured by the Colobus and all the other species of primate in Diani, the 'Colobridges' and any other related news. Such as fundraisers, open days etc, because the Colobus Trust is run on donations, Tour fees, the Volunteers accommodation money, and other charitable sources the Colobus Update serves to attract interest to the plight of the Colobus.

The words 'Mercy Dash' were always dreaded in the cottage. It meant we had received a telephone call concerning an injured monkey. Whilst I was there, I observed the rescuing and treatment of 4 individuals. On my second day in Diani, I witnessed my first 'Mercy Dash'. An adult female Colobus, belonging to the habituated troop living on the Trust's ground, had been involved in a Road Traffic Accident (RTA) with a matatu (a local minibus). Both her hindlegs were shattered and we had no choice but to proceed with euthanasia. I seemed to have brought bad luck to the Colobus of Diani because on the same day, we were called again. This time it was a Juvenile male Colobus that had jumped on to a transducer and been electrocuted. After 5 days of observation and treatment he too had to be put down. The sheer surge of electricity kills off the blood vessels in the extremities that touch the power source and result in the limb rotting.

On my fifth day, a fisherman on the beach took us to a tiny abandoned Sykes monkey (*Cercopithecus albogularis*). It was less than a week old and was able to sit comfortably in the palm of my hand. We passed the individual on to a local couple that specialises in orphans, but regrettably the tiny infant died 5 days later with pneumonia.

It all sounds like doom and gloom but we did have one success story when I was there. The saga of 'Kinky', an adult Satellite male was very rewarding. The reason for the name, 'Kinky', was that he had a kink in the end of his tail. He could usually be found lying around on the roof of the cottage or on nearby trees. One day I saw that he had some cuts on his ribcage and shoulder, we enticed him toward one of our treatment cages, placed a banana in side and in he went. Anyway, we stitched him up with the help of Mohsin Likoniwalla, our local vet, and released him a week later.

Another of my projects was to study the behaviour of the habituated Colobus Troop, living in the 20 acres of land belonging to the Trust. I studied them twice a week from 6:30am to 6pm. The troop consisted of 8 individuals. The Alfa Adult male, Mkubwa; the beta Adult male, Mdogo, the Alfa female, Eliza; an adult female who had lost her left forearm due to electrocution, Kilema (in Swahili it means 'handicapped'); a sub-adult female called Fupi (which means shortened in Swahili), she had lost the white tip to her tail; a Juvenile female, Neema; a Juvenile male, Jura; and the youngest of the group, Nuru, named after the night-watchman's daughter, who will be one year old on the 21<sup>st</sup> October. It was fascinating to watch an animal that very little is known about. Watching the Colobus play and interact with the resident Sykes troop was an amazing experience. Learning about the different trees,

which ones the Colobus feed on and relax in and which trees have local Tribal medicinal properties.

One of my main tasks was the constructing of the 'Colobridges'. These funny looking suspended ladders are structures over the main Diani Beach Road, that have visibly reduced the number of RTAs. To date, there are 7 'Colobridges' on the Diani Beach Road. Usually the Colobus are the last primate in Diani to use the 'Colobridges', it is mainly the Sykes and Vervets that pluck up the courage first. It took two attempts and a whole week to get the bridge up, but a huge feeling of achievement to see the final construction.

Another task of mine was to design and build a trapping cage with a squeeze panel in it to aid treatment. It was contracted for the Monkey Pest Problem that the hotels have on the Diani Beach Strip. The main problem is the large troop of Yellow Baboons (*Papio cyncephalus*), especially the adult males who are incredibly large compared to the small Sykes and Vervets you get used to wandering around the cottage. But when a large male is walking toward you or yawning you definitely do not want to annoy him.

Bakari Garise, one of the Kenyan field Staff, and I carried out a monthly report on the Phenology of the favourite trees of the Colobus in the Diani area. This was interesting because Bakari (I also found this with all the native staff) had a wealth of knowledge that can only be learned from living and experiencing a country in its rural areas.

One of the other projects run by the Trust is the Educational Workshops for local schools. Whilst I was there we ran two workshops and both were a great success. Taking the children down to the coral reef and rattling off all the information I learned at Millport and from Chris Inchley made me realise that actually I did listen in those lectures. It was a good feeling to pass on that knowledge to another generation and make the resident children aware of the dangers facing their local flora and fauna.

I would like to thank Paula Kahumbu MSc., the voluntary Director, for keeping me amused and active during my 6 week stay. She was a library of knowledge, a great contact and a good friend. I would also like to thank Beth Thomas and Anna Burnett, the two other volunteers, who always kept me on my toes.

I would also like to thank all the field staff: Bakari, Rimba, Hamisi and Robert, who never hesitated to pass on knowledge to me or listen to anything I had to say. They always helped me when I need an extra hand or another ounce of strength when building bridges and cages. My thanks also to Jared and Hasan who cooked and cleaned for me and generally looked after me for 6 weeks. And out of all the staff my thanks to Bahola, our night-watchman, who always seemed to time his ambushes on us (coming back from the pub) perfectly. Without all the Kenyan staff I'm sure the Trust would not run as smoothly as it does and I found some great friends and shared some wonderful experiences with each of them.

Finally, I would like to thank the James Rennie Bequest for giving me funding when many others would not.