

Misitu Yetu Project: Ruvu South Forest Reserve

Participatory Forest Management

Summary

The Ruvu South Forest Reserve is one of the most extensive areas of coastal forest in Tanzania. The reserve covers 35,000 ha and is a Central Government Forest Reserve. The reserve is under extremely heavy pressure from charcoal production to supply the neighbouring city of Dar es Salaam. TFCG is working with the Forestry and Beekeeping Division, local government and the communities surrounding the reserve to establish joint forest management.

Introduction

Ruvu South is one of the most important coastal forests in Tanzania. The reserve is a 35,000 ha mosaic of forest, woodland, thicket, swamp and grassland in Kibaha and Kisarawe Districts, Coast Region. Approximately 9,800 ha of the reserve can be considered forest, much of this riparian forest. The forest is under constant pressure from the illegal production of charcoal to supply markets in Dar es Salaam which lies 45 km to the north-east of the reserve. Currently the Ruvu Fuelwood Pilot Project, a project of the Forestry and Beekeeping Division is responsible for the management of the reserve. Since 2000 the Tanzania Forest Conservation Group has been promoting Joint Forest Management at Ruvu South.

The reserve is 45 km west of Dar es Salaam. The Tanzanian Central Line Railway cuts through the reserve as does the Kazimzumbwi – Mzenga road.

History

The reserve was gazetted as a forest reserve in 1967.

Biological Importance

The reserve is a 35,000 ha mosaic of coastal vegetation including open dry forest, closed dry forest, thicket, swamp, woodland and grassland. There are four Eastern Arc / Coastal Forest endemic vertebrate species in the reserve and two species endemic to the Coastal Forests. There are also 33 species of plant within the reserve which are endemic to the Swahilian Regional Centre of Endemism. A population of elephants frequents the reserve, probably migrating between the reserve and the northern Selous. It is part of the 'Kisarawe District Coastal Forest' Important Bird Area (Baker and Baker 2002).

TFCG's Conservation Activities

TFCG has been working in Ruvu South as part of the Misitu Yetu Project, a partnership project between the Forestry and Beekeeping Division, Kibaha and Kisarawe District Councils, TFCG, the Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania and CARE-Tanzania. TFCG has been working with the eight villages and one-subvillage that surround the reserve (Kipangege, Kibwemwenda, Chakenge, Kifuru, and Kola) to promote joint forest management. So far the project has succeeded in strengthening the village environmental committees in the various sites and has initiated the process of deciding joint management areas.

References

Baker, N.E. and E.M. Baker (2002). Important Bird Areas of Tanzania. Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania, Dar es Salaam.

Site Details

Location: Coastal, Kisarawe and Kibaha Districts, Coast Region

Area: 35,000 ha

Biodiversity: Four Eastern Arc/Coastal Forest endemic vertebrate species; two species endemic to the Coastal Forests.

Status: Threatened by charcoal production and agricultural expansion.

Ruvu South
Due to intense charcoal production, TFCG is working with the Forestry and Beekeeping Division, local government and communities to establish joint forest management.



