

GENOWA ECHO

ENDLESS POTENTIAL

NEWSLETTER | VOL. 18 - AUGUST 2024

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF HOMA BAY



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A Message from The CECM COMMUNICATIONS



GRACE MERCY OSEWE (MRS)

CECM COMMUNICATIONS

As we reflect on the events of the past month, our county was faced with challenging times due to the anti-tax protests that disrupted government operations. Despite these hurdles, Governor Gladys Wanga's leadership has been instrumental in steering us through these difficult times.

In this edition, our team tell the groundbreaking story of our early childhood education sector which received a significant boost with the introduction of modern classrooms through the Genowa Ondoa Kaunda Classrooms Initiative. Furthermore, the boda boda sector is experiencing significant growth with seed grants being provided to riders' cooperatives to expand their businesses.

In this edition, we are also excited to introduce a new series – Explore Homa Bay County Series – which will showcase the diverse tourist attractions our county has to offer. This initiative, spearheaded by the Public Communication team, aims to highlight the beauty of our county and promote tourism.

Governor Gladys Wanga remains committed to her promises of transformation and innovation in our county. Through partnerships with technology-based firms and a focus on key growth areas such as renewable energy and sustainable environmental conservation, we are working towards a brighter future for Homa Bay County.

Enjoy your read!

THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Grace Mercy Osewe – CECM

Communications

Atieno Otieno – Chief Officer

and Editor-in-Chief

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Communications and Editor

Vickery Omwandho

– Deputy Director

Communications

Lawrence Magware –

Managing Editor

Bushnell Odhiambo – Editor

Collins Ogutu – Editor

Eunice Atieno – Photography

Livone Molo – Photography

Geoffrey Khoore –

Videography

Robert Wera – Videography

Philip Ogai – Graphics

Renetech Graphics – Design

and Layout



County Government of Homa Bay

Homa Bay County

P.O. Box 469 - 40300,
Homa Bay.

communications@homabay.go.ke

ONDOA KAUNDA: AN INITIATIVE STEEPED IN DIGNITY AND QUALITY IN LEARNING

By Lawrence Magware



Governor Wanga admires young Mitchell of God Ndonyo Primary School as she puts a layer to mark the launch of Ondoa Kaunda Classrooms Initiative

On a momentous day at Yiembe Primary School in Kanyamwa Kosewe, the air was filled with excitement as pupils eagerly awaited a special guest. The sound of jubilant songs and cheers echoed through the school grounds as they anticipated the unveiling of a brand-new, modern four-classroom block to replace the old, rundown mabati structure that had been a longstanding eyesore at the school.

Governor Gladys Wanga’s dedication to transforming the education landscape in Homa Bay County was evident as she made it a focal point of her campaign for the gubernatorial bid in 2022. Witnessing the dire conditions in which many children were receiving their education - from crumbling classrooms to the lack of proper facilities - she was spurred to take action.

The impact of Governor Gladys Wanga’s visit to Yiembe Primary School led to the establishment of the Genowa Ondoa Kaunda Classrooms Initiative, a bold and forward-thinking plan to construct 160 modern classrooms across the county. This initiative aimed to provide a conducive learning environment for early-year education pupils and address the pressing education challenges faced by the community.

A historic moment unfolded on Wednesday, 10th July 2024, as Governor Gladys Wanga, in collaboration with her government and education stakeholders, inaugurated the Genowa Ondoa Kaunda Classrooms Initiative at God Ndonyo Primary School in Kibiri Ward. This transformative undertaking symbolized a commitment to building 160 state-of-the-art classrooms, a significant leap forward from the previous administration’s efforts.



Pupils of Uwii Primary School in Gembe recite a poem during the Poccasion of the launch classroom construction

The innovative approach of engaging community-based labour contracting in the construction process not only injected much-needed financial resources into local communities but also created valuable employment opportunities for youth and women. This inclusive approach showcased the commitment of the initiative to uplifting and empowering the community.

As construction progresses across Homa Bay County, it is evident that the County Government's unwavering dedication to enhancing the quality, accessibility, and affordability of basic education is making a tangible difference in the lives of children. The Genowa Ondoa Kaunda Classrooms Initiative stands as a beacon of hope for a brighter and more promising future for the youth of the county.



ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE: COUNTY EMBRACES COLLABORATIVE AND PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES TO CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE

FLLOCA ROLLS OUT IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK ON CLIMATE MITIGATION



Photo Credit: Veroncia Nyasoro

By Veroncia Nyasoro

The County Government of Homa Bay has adopted broad-based and community-focused initiatives as avenues through which it can effectively address climate change mitigations and environmental conservation.

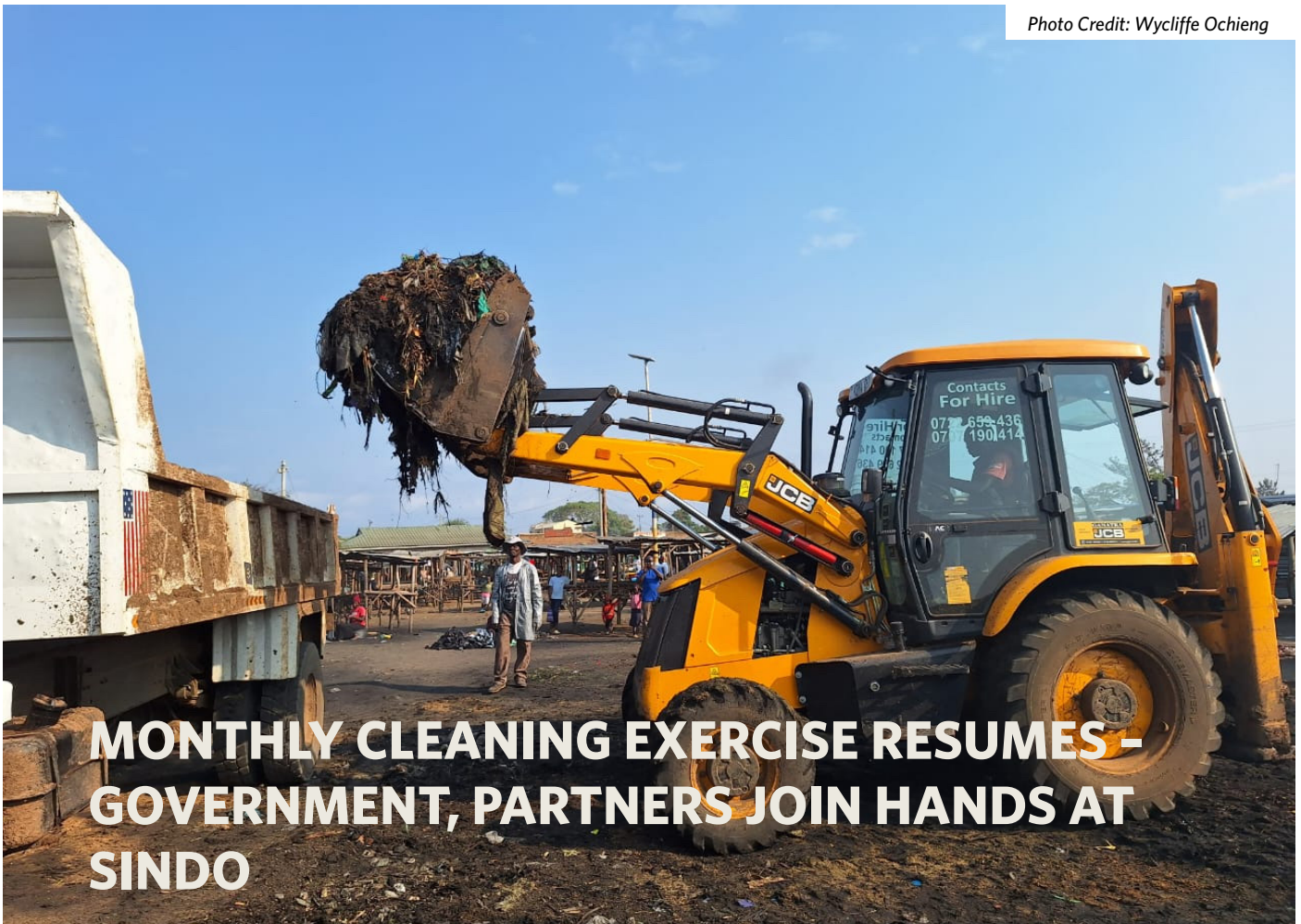
Through a partnership with the National Treasury and Economic Planning, the County Government completed the Environmental and Social Safeguards screening of 80 community Tree Nurseries. This screening was a crucial step in the preparation for the County Climate Resilience Investment projects. These projects will be implemented and funded under the Financing Locally-Led Climate Action (FLLoCA) initiative.

Two community Tree Nurseries will be established in each of the 40 wards as part of this endeavour. Through the screening process, community members actively participated and identified

specific tree species well-suited to the local environment and climate. The objective is to protect and rehabilitate the degraded areas, mitigate the risk of floods, and promote environmental conservation across the wards.

The community-led approach to increasing the number of tree nurseries in the county aims to ensure many farmers in the rural areas are reached and also to support the smallholder farmers to plant a billion trees on farms and on their lands to provide opportunities for entrepreneurship.

Through economic stability, community engagement, and knowledge sharing, the trees themselves offer a reliable way for rural farm families to build long-term assets. This proactive approach to environmental and social safeguards underscores the county's commitment to sustainable development and climate resilience.



MONTHLY CLEANING EXERCISE RESUMES – GOVERNMENT, PARTNERS JOIN HANDS AT SINDO

By Wycliffe Ochieng

In a show of commitment to environmental clean-up and stakeholders' involvement, the directorate of the environment in the county led by CECM Water, Sanitation, Environment, Forestry and Climate Change Dr Joash Aloo together with his counterpart Dr John Agili of Blue Economy and Fisheries and the business fraternity from Sindo Market spearheaded the monthly exercise clean-up in and around the town.

Speaking during the occasion, Dr Aloo stressed the need for local action in addressing environmental concerns during the clean-up operations.

“We want to give Sindo residents a conducive environment to live and work in and at the same time stress the issue of environmental conservation seriously as a personal responsibility to everyone,” said Dr Aloo.

“ We all need to understand that the changes in weather patterns that we are experiencing have largely been caused by the unnatural actions we have done to the environment, therefore we need to find out the best ways to address the issue by planting many trees and conserving our surroundings appropriately. Said Dr Joash Aloo.

As residents we have a noble responsibility to

reduce global warming gases by keeping our environment clean among other things that will inhibit global warming for the present as well as future generations,” said Dr Agili

Similar exercises have already been held in Homa Bay, Mbita, Oyugis, and Kendu Bay among other major trading centers across the county. In October 2022, Governor Gladys Wanga institutionalized the town clean-up exercise when she led her administration in the inaugural event in Homa Bay Town



HOMABAY COUNTY JOINS MAKING CITIES RESILIENT 2030

Photo Credit: Veroncia Nyasoro



By Collins Ogutu

The County's Department of Governance, Administration, Communication and Devolution (GAC&D) in partnership with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction concluded a five-day Disaster Risk Reduction Workshop where the County joined the Making Cities Resilient 2030 (MCR 2030).

MCR 2030 supports the integration of Disaster Risk Reduction with Climate Change Adaptation on sustainable development as crucial for building resilient communities' efforts to build resilience in cities can benefit from integrating Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change

The workshop under the theme: Making Homabay County Resilient said the was funded by the Deutsche Gesellschaft for Internationale

Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) through the Resilience Initiative Africa Project.

The capacity building workshop, while promoting the importance of effective climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, aimed to increase County Government actions' engagement in local development and planning with disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation agenda.

Making her final remarks, the CECM for the Department of GACD Grace Mercy Osewe, reaffirmed the pivotal role of the County Government in Disaster Risk Reduction. "In the face of such adversity, the role of our County as the first line of defense in Disaster Risk Reduction becomes ever more critical." She spoke. "We are the frontline where the impacts of these calamities are most acutely felt and where the response is most urgently needed."

Ms. Isabel Njihia, Associate Program Management Officer United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction, Regional Office Africa expressed appreciation to the County Government of Homabay for the enormous contributions to Africa's disaster risk reduction agenda.

She added that UNDRR will continue to work closely with Homabay County Government to support the strengthening and implementation of policies to ensure the devolved unit is better positioned to serve the county residents through Risk Reduction and Resilience Enhancement



HEALTH: COUNTY PUTS EMPHASIS ON PREVENTIVE APPROACHES IN MCH SERVICES

COUNTY COLLABORATES WITH PARTNERS ON VITAMIN A DRIVE ON CHILDREN



Photo Credit: Veroncia Nyasoro

By Veroncia Nyasoro

The County Department of Health and Sanitation in collaboration with Helen Keller International and the National Government-Ministry of Health, held a five-day training on Vitamin A Supplementation and Deworming (VAS+D) for Children Aged 6-59 Months. This was a trainer of trainees on Vitamin A Supplementation and Deworming (VAS+D) for the County Health Management Teams (CHMTs) from Homa Bay, Siaya, Migori, Kisumu, Narok and Nyamira Counties.

These efforts aim to combat the detrimental effects of vitamin A deficiency and parasitic worms, which can lower infection resistance, cause stunting and lead to severe eye conditions, including blindness if untreated

The training also aimed at enhancing the knowledge and skills of health care providers on VAS+D community mobilization, planning, distribution and administration to the targeted children; strengthening VAS+D Advocacy, communication and social Mobilization (ACSM) among the targeted audiences; strengthening knowledge and skills of health care providers on VAS+D monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning to understand, prevent, mitigate and respond to VAS+D gender-based obstacles.

VAS+D is important because it boots immune systems and ensures children absorb the vital nutrients they receive because vitamin A and Albendazole follow similar distribution schedules, delivering the nutrition intervention together is a simple, effective way to improve children's overall health.

LIFE-SAVING MOTHER AND CHILD EQUIPMENT AVAILED TO ARREST MATERNAL MORTALITIES



Photo Credit: Veroncia Nyasoro

support for newborns experiencing asphyxia, the manual resuscitator has the potential to make a significant impact on reducing infant mortality rates.

Overall, these donated pieces of equipment will greatly strengthen the capacity of healthcare providers to deliver high-quality care to both mothers and their newborns, ultimately improving health outcomes and saving lives.

Additionally, the Department of Health in collaboration with Triggerize held a two-day cluster meeting for the service providers both from public and private facilities who are implementing ASRH-developed impact bond. Tiko seeks to address the service uptake gaps for adolescents between 15-19 years concerning HIV prevention, teenage pregnancy and sexual and gender-based violence

By Communication Team

The County Department of Health and Sanitation received a generous donation from LWALA Community Newborns Alliance. The donation included a Non-pneumatic Anti-Shock Garment (NASG) and a Newborn Manual Resuscitator, both of which are crucial in providing essential care for mothers and their newborns.

The Non-pneumatic Anti-Shock Garment (NASG) is an innovative and life-saving device designed to stabilize women who are experiencing severe bleeding. By compressing blood vessels and reducing blood loss, the NASG plays a critical role in addressing one of the primary causes of maternal mortality. This device will be instrumental in saving lives and improving the outcomes for mothers in need of emergency care.

The Newborn Manual Resuscitator is another vital piece of equipment that will greatly benefit healthcare providers. This device will enable practitioners to effectively manage the breathing difficulties of newborns who are struggling to breathe on their own. By providing the necessary



Photo Credit: Veroncia Nyasoro



Photo Credit: Veroncia Nyasoro

COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT: KES 20 MILLION GRANT AWARDED TO 20 WARD BODA BODA SACCOS IN COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE



By Communication Team

Governor Gladys Wanga of Homa Bay County has taken a groundbreaking step in empowering boda boda riders by unveiling the Homa Bay County Boda Boda Sacco Grant under the Inua Boda Boda initiative. The distribution of Kenya Shillings 20 million to 20 Ward Boda Boda Saccos in the first phase of the program marks a significant milestone in transforming the boda boda sector in Homa Bay County.

“In my manifesto, I promised to transform this vital sector and economically empower our boda boda operators. To fulfill this promise, we have embarked on an initiative to establish Ward Transport Cooperatives, a strategy that we believe will help us achieve our goals,” stated Governor Wanga during the launch held at Raila Odinga Stadium in Homa Bay. The goal is to extend this financial support to all 40 Ward Boda Boda Saccos, setting the stage for empowering boda boda operators through a revolving fund for affordable credit access to support business growth.



Of the 40 Ward Boda Boda Saccos, 37 have already received their registration certificates, conducted general meetings, elected Sacco officials, and opened bank accounts. Governor Wanga emphasized the importance of supporting and supervising these Saccos through the Directorate of Cooperative Development and Marketing to ensure compliance

with the Cooperatives Act Cap 490, 2012. This oversight is vital to prevent fund misappropriation and ensure the success of the Saccos Grant, which is backed by the County Enterprise and Affirmative Action Bill.

With an average of 1,300 members per ward, the boda boda sector in the county employs the majority of youth, totaling approximately 52,000 boda boda riders. The newly registered Ward Boda Boda Saccos have seen a steady increase in membership,

with about 15,000 members currently registered and a projected growth to 35,000 by mid-next year.

The initiative has garnered support from financial institutions such as KCB, Equity Bank, Cooperative Bank, Absa Bank PLC, and CIC Insurance, among other partners, highlighting a collaborative effort to drive cooperative development and economic empowerment in Homa Bay County.



YOUTH IN AQUACULTURE: COUNTY, FARM AFRICA ENTER MOU ON YOUTH EMPOWERMENT THROUGH AQUACULTURE

By Lawrence Magware



Photo Credit: Livone Molo

The County government of Homa Bay has solidified its commitment to youth and women empowerment by formalizing a partnership with Farm Africa through the Youth in Sustainable Aquaculture (YISA) project, generously funded by the Mastercard Foundation.

This initiative is strategically designed to empower over 150,000 young individuals, including women, involved in aquaculture value chains by creating job opportunities and enhancing sustainable aquaculture practices with a target to cultivate



Photo Credit: Livone Molo

resilient livelihoods and foster innovative aquaculture approaches that will open up promising prospects for both young women and men.

Youth In Sustainable Aquaculture (YISA) is a program that empowers young women and men to increase their production in the aquaculture value chain and create more job opportunities in the industry.

The local service provider is capacity strengthening the participants in the production sector to promote their proficiency and this will enhance

their productivity which leads to the creation of new jobs, improved jobs and sustained jobs and with this in place would have improved livelihood and food security in the community.

The program is in collaboration with the Mastercard Foundation and partnership with Farm Africa Echo Network Africa Ltd Lattice Aquarech Ltd Ramogi Institute of Advanced Technology - RIAT Hydro Victoria and Livingwood Ltd to enhance resilient livelihoods through innovative aquaculture practices.



URBAN UPGRADING: GOVERNOR WANGA ROUNDS UP KISIP 2 AND ESP PROJECT LAUNCHES

By Communication Team

The commissioning of the Misambi Ultramodern Market construction under the collaborative Economic Stimulus Program with the State Department of Housing and Urban Development marked the culmination of similar project launches in Sindo, Kijebi, Luanda Nyamasare, Ndhiwa, Kobodo, Rodi-Kopany, and Kendu Bay. These initiatives aim to boost economic activities across the county, promoting financial empowerment for our people.

The markets will have an ultra-modern single floor each with a 200 traders capacity shed. The ground floor will mainly consist of smart stalls to provide display space, storage and security of their wares, cold rooms and administrative offices. The first floors will accommodate offices, a revenue center, an ICT hub, a social hall, a lactating room, a food court and an ATM lobby. An offsite ablution block accommodating lady, gents and PWDs will be provided as part of the facility.

The markets will equally have unique facilities such as cold rooms for preserving fresh products

with sanitation and water supply taken care of by a 5,000-litre UPVC roof tank and 30, 000 liters steel tank fully equipped with booster pumps.

Further, with the groundbreaking for the upgrade of Nyandiwa as part of the ongoing informal settlements upgrading project under KISIP 2, Governor Wanga brought to an end such similar activities already done in Homa Bay's Shauri Yako and Makongeni estates, Rusinga Old Town and Oyugis' A-Thousand Street.

The infrastructure component of the KISIP 2 coordinates investment in services and infrastructure construction in selected settlements. The investment portfolio menu includes; roads, bicycle paths, pedestrian walkways, street, and security lighting, vending platforms, solid waste collection and sorting, stormwater drainage, water and sanitation systems, public parks, and green spaces as well as investments related to crime and violence including but not limited to community centres.

COUNTY AT A GLANCE



The County Government of Homa Bay, in collaboration with the national government through the National Youth Service (NYS), has commenced the construction of dyke wall along River Tende towards the Riwa City Special Economic Zone. The dykes will help control erosion, filter pollutants, protect aquatic ecosystems, and, above all, cushion residents of Kibiri ward, West Rachuonyo, and lower Kochia from floods. This is also part of the county's readiness to attract prospective investors to begin setting up their establishments at the Riwa City SEZ and the aggregation park.

The County Government of Homa Bay has begun the process of developing the County Valuation Roll for its municipalities. This document will set the institutional, policy and legal framework for valuing land and determining rates to ensure fair and efficient revenue administration. This is a key step towards bolstering our county's growth and development and is in line with H.E. Governor Gladys Wanga's aspiration of elevating Homa Bay to City status.



The County Government of Homa Bay, through the Department of Public Health and Medical Services, held a County Health Stakeholders Meeting themed "Partnering for Progress in Advancing Health Equity in Homa Bay County." The meeting, which brought together 23 partners, focused on collaborating to improve the health sector within the county. The government emphasizes the importance of transparency in handling health matters which would include clarity in budget, work plan and set targets.



The County Government of Homa Bay has adopted a mentorship strategy and inter-generational dialogues targeting adolescents, young adults, key community figures, advocates, community members, and students. These tailored dialogue sessions incorporate legal, sports, and medical services to reinforce advocacy for HIV and gender-based violence prevention, shape gender perspectives, raise awareness on social behavior change, and instill the value of diligence among students through career guidance sessions.

The County Government of Homa Bay, in partnership with the USAID (Western Kenya Water Project), completed a three-day workshop. The workshop aimed to align the County Climate Change Act of 2023 and the Homa Bay County Finance Regulations of 2023 with the proposed changes in the National Climate Change Act. These amendments to the national legislation aim to improve policy coherence, support carbon trading, and ensure effective utilization of climate finance. Further, it aimed to enhance the County Climate Change Act to address current and future climate challenges and to ensure its effectiveness in meeting the County Climate Finance Regulations. These regulations facilitate the mobilization and management of climate finance and aim to enhance the capacity of the county government and communities to implement climate actions and achieve sustainable development goals.



Homa Bay County has begun developing the County Youth Development Policy, which seeks to mainstream and entrench the youth in all government functions and development programs. The policy is envisioned to provide infrastructure for youth empowerment programs including creation of a youth enterprise fund, a youth service and the Homa Bay Youth Council. This document will also enhance youth participation in agriculture, climate change, entrepreneurship, blue economy and robustly address matters to do with sexual reproductive health, drug and substance abuse and the triple threat. The policy also seeks to strictly implement affirmative action in all aspects of governance. The document also proposes to have annual youth forum and an annual youth stakeholder's forum to appreciate the milestones thus and challenges therein.

THIS MONTH ON EXPLORE HOMA BAY COUNTY SERIES



THE MYTHICAL LAKE SIMBI - FLAMINGOS ARE BACK!

Kenya is home to over 1 million flamingos, with the majority residing in Lake Nakuru and Lake Bogoria. Each year, as the Rift Valley and its surroundings get colder, more than a quarter of these birds migrate to the warmer Lake Simbi. Despite being deeper than the other two lakes, Lake Simbi offers an ideal breeding ground for the world's fourth most beautiful bird species, making it a must-visit for tourists.

THE ICONIC MBITA-RUSINGA BRIDGE

The Mbita-Rusinga Bridge, spanning 160 meters in length, 10 meters in width, and reaching a height of 8 meters, stands as a magnificent feat of engineering on the serene waters of Lake Victoria. Serving as a crucial link between mainland Mbita Point and the historic Rusinga Island, this architectural wonder was meticulously designed to facilitate the seamless

movement of people and goods to and from the island. Furthermore, the bridge's construction has also enhanced the natural migration of aquatic life into the Winam Gulf. Renowned for its captivating beauty, the bridge has garnered widespread attention, making it one of the most photographed man-made structures in Kenya and a prominent attraction for tourists visiting the region



HOMA HILLS: THE SPLENDOR OF HOMA BAY

The Homa Hills is a striking mountain range located along the Lake Victoria shoreline in Homa Bay County. It spans 6 kilometers and is renowned for its breathtaking views and natural beauty. The main peaks, Nyasanga, Apoyo, and Homa, are characterized by cliffs that rise dramatically from the Winam Gulf, with the tallest peak, Homa, that gives the county its name, reaching a height of 1581 meters. Additionally, the range's geothermal potential stemming from its location on a tectonically active Kendu fault has sparked interest, with hot springs like Bala, Abundu, and Ayomo attracting visitors, offering both traditional and spiritual significance. Homa Hills also offers excellent hiking and scrambling opportunities, providing stunning vistas as well as wonderful panoramic views of Lake Victoria's Winam Gulf from its higher elevations.



