**National Museums of Kenya
(Nairobi, Kenya)**
Directorate of Research and Collection
Department of Zoology, Ichthyology Section

in collaboration with

**Royal Museum for Central Africa
(Tervuren, Belgium)**
Department of African Zoology
Ichthyology Unit / FishBase

Local FishBase and Fish Taxonomy training session

Call for applications for 20 scholarships

Deadline for submission of applications: 30/06/2016

Dates of training session: 23/09/2016 - 29/09/2016

Location of training session: National Museums of Kenya (Nairobi, Kenya)

1.   General context

The National Museums of Kenya (NMK) in Nairobi (Kenya) is a multi-disciplinary institution whose role is to collect, preserve, study, document and present Kenya's past and present cultural and natural heritage. The Ichthyology section of the NMK Zoology Department was established in 1997 and curates the most advanced and representative collection of fishes in East Africa. It houses over 50,000 fish specimens of whom approximately 35,000 fresh and brackish water specimens. This collection supports research in taxonomy, phylogeny, biogeography, ecology, biodiversity conservation and aquaculture. The staff members of the Ichthyology section are involved in various national and international research projects and collaborations, and have published a vast amount of scientific research on the ichthyofauna of eastern Africa. The NMK Ichthyology Section has a long and productive history of collaboration with the Ichthyology Unit of the Royal Museum for Central Africa (RMCA) in Tervuren (Belgium). This Unit has a more than a century long tradition in biodiversity studies on African fresh- and brackish water fishes. It curates by far the largest collection of African fresh- and brackish water fish species in the world and holds a unique library dedicated to the ichthyodiversity of Africa. The RMCA is a founding member of the FishBase Consortium. FishBase (www.fishbase.org) is the world's largest, freely accessible, online database on fishes. The FishBase team of the RMCA is responsible for validating and updating the information on the about 3,500 African fresh- and brackish water fish species in FishBase.

Since 2005 the RMCA hosts an annual, comprehensive training session on FishBase and fish taxonomy (http://fishbase.africamuseum.be). Over the years, more than 50 scientists from 20 different African countries attended this state-of-the-art training. In 2015, a spin-off of this training was held in Africa for the first time. It took place in Dakar (Senegal) and was the result of a collaboration between the RMCA and a former Senegalese FishBase trainee. With the success of that first edition, it was decided to organize a local spin-off on an annual basis. Mrs. Dorothy Wanja Nyingi, a FishBase alumni, was selected to organize the second edition at NMK.

2.   Characteristics

The local training session intends to develop interest and to build capacity in fish identification, fish systematics and the use of FishBase. It comprises following components:

- an introduction to **FishBase:** illustration of the encyclopedic character and the use of the most important tools in this database.
- theoretical lectures and practical workshops on **fish taxonomy and systematics** supervised by experienced ichthyologists from local research institutions.

- **knowledge exchange** with Dr. Arnold Bitja Nyom (University of Ngaoundéré, Cameroon);
- a **field trip** to the Tana River basin outside Nairobi to illustrate sampling, preservation and identification techniques.

## 3.	Target group

The target group of the local training session consists of **postgraduate students** and **associates of research institutions** who are currently studying or working at a **Kenyan** university or research institution, and who are engaged in the field of ichthyology (fisheries, fish diversity, aquaculture, taxonomy, etc.). MSc students and PhD candidates are encouraged to apply. **Civil servants** and **project officers** attached to a **Kenyan** ministry or government research institution with an interest and expertise in African fishes, preferably freshwater fishes, are also invited to submit an application.

## 4.	Eligibility criteria

- Only applications from researchers, government employees, scientific or technical personnel linked to a scientific institution, ministry, university or research institute in **Kenya** will be taken into consideration. Applications from consultants or individuals will not be accepted.

- Candidates without a **degree** (min. BSc) should demonstrate a record of substantial work related to ichthyology.

- **Language skills**: a good command of English is required.

In addition to the candidate's CV, the following questions will be used to evaluate the application:

- What is the level of direct or indirect benefits of the training for the candidate for his/her future studies or career, and what is the intention for the use and support of FishBase?

- What are the prospects of continued collaboration between the applicant, his/her institution, NMK and RMCA, and what mutual benefit can be expected?

All applications will be subject to an evaluation by internal experts from NMK and RMCA. By submitting an application the candidates voluntarily accept the final selection.

The training staff may formulate specific conditions for the sharing of existing data with successful applicants.

The NMK and RMCA encourage the participation of women in this training program, though applications are evaluated on an equal basis.

5. Instructions for applications

A complete and legitimate application file consists of:

a) A completed, dated and signed **application form**. This form can be downloaded from following websites:

- **http://www.museums.or.ke**
- **http://fishbase.africamuseum.be** (*Training in Africa*)

b) A separate **motivation letter** (1 page) outlining:

- o your experience in fish identification/taxonomy and why you consider yourself a good candidate for this training session;
- o your expectations from the training session and how your studies or future career can benefit from it;
- o the perspectives of a continued collaboration between you, your home institution, NMK and RMCA.

c) A **letter from your supervisor or mentor authorizing your participation** in the requested training session, confirming your current position within the institution and indicating a commitment to make good use of the newly acquired expertise. This **authorization letter** must be dated and signed, and provided with a stamp of the institution. The name, position and address of the author of the letter must be clearly mentioned.

d) Copies of relevant **diplomas**.

e) One recent **passport photo**.

f) A copy of a **proof of identity** (identity card, passport, …).

Only complete application files will be taken into consideration. No additional information communicated after the deadline will be accepted, unless upon specific request from NMK and RMCA.

The complete application file, preferably as one single PDF file, should reach the following two e-mail addresses before 30/06/2016 at midnight (GMT+2):

dnyingi@museums.or.ke and callfishbase@africamuseum.be

Reception of application files will only be acknowledged by e-mail to the e-mail address mentioned in the application form. This acknowledgement will be done shortly after the application form is received. All applicants will be personally informed of the results of the selection process by the end of July 2016.

6.   Scholarship conditions

- **Equipment:** all necessary equipment will be provided. Candidates who have a laptop are encouraged to bring it along.

- Once selected, the candidates are expected to attend the entire training session, to participate in all courses and workshops, to take part in the field trip, to respect the timing and program of the training and to complete an evaluation form at the end of the training session. Any infringement of this commitment may lead to annulation of their participation.

- **Duration**: the duration of the local training session is seven days (Friday – Thursday). Selected candidates are supposed to be available for the entire session and are expected to arrive in Nairobi before the onset of the training session.

- **Expenses covered:** only expenses related to coffee breaks, lunch and the field trip will be covered by the organization of this training session. No other type of repayment will be provided. Accommodation and transportation costs to and from NMK are at the candidates own expense.