Part 2

In this section I will show a link between the vegetation, climate and animals in the Savanna ecosystem.

The Savanna grasslands in Kenya represent a transition zone between rainforests and hot deserts. Vegetation has had to adapt to a tropical co ntinental climate.

The climate in Kenya is a tropical continental climate, and has two distinct seasons:

- A very warm & dry season - similar to a desert climate
- A hot & wet season – similar to a rainforest

Graph 3 is a climate graph for Kenya. It can clearly be seen on this graph that there is are distinct 'wet' & 'dry' seasons. It can be seen from the graph that in April and May it is a wet season. In May rainfall is 149mm and the temperature is 29 degrees Celsius . In April rainfall is 108mm and the temperature is 31 degrees Celsius. It can also be seen that in October and November it is a relatively wet season. In October rainfall is 62mm and the temperature is 29 degrees Celsius. In November the rainfall is 66mm and the temperature is 30 degrees Celsius.

Generally, from December to March and from June to September it is a dry season. It can be seen on the graph that through December to March are on average the hottest months, with the temperature being as high as 33 degrees Celsius in March and 32 degrees Celsius in December. The coolest months are from July to September, with all of these months having a temperature of 28 degrees Celsius. The difference in temperatures aren't big, but it can be seen that the hottest and coolest periods are the exact opposite from the northern hemisphere (because Kenya is in the southern hemisphere). These months are dry seasons because rainfall can be as little as 10mm, shown in February.

Generally speaking the climate of Kenya all year round is warm, with a minimal temperature shown on the graph at 28 degrees Celsius. Change in climate may affect tourism at different times of the year. In the dry months (December to March and June to September) tourists will be attracted to the Savanna more so than in the wet months (April to May and October to November). This is because in the wet months if may be more difficult to go on a Safari as wet conditions may prove it incapable to travel to certain places. Flash floods could also cause a problem by turning roads into stream s and generally flooding the area.

In my opinion tourists would be attracted to the coast in the wet season. This is because attractions for tourists are easily accessible at the coast and they do not need to worry about flash floods as much if they are not travelling anywhere. The hot weather would also dry up a lot of the rain very quickly on the coast whereas on safari's it is full of rigid landscape.

Vegetation in Kenya mostly consists of grasslands and trees. In particular the Acacia and Baobab trees. Generally, vegetation changes from being lifeless in the dry season to being full of life in the wet season. In the dry season the Baobab tree has few leaves, this is so the tree can conserve moisture. Grasslands are yellow, withered and straw-like – most die and leave only the roots behind.
In the wet season the Baobab tree is full of leaves, grassland is a height of 3 -4m consisting of thick clumps and often growing very quickly.

The most famous animals in Kenya are known as 'The Big 5'. These animals consist of Lions, Leopards, Elephants, Buffalo's and Rhinos. Beside the 'Big 5' there are many other animals that live in Kenya. From the Giraffes, Zebras, Baboons, Wildebeests, Warthogs and to all the different Antelopes, Gazelles and numerous, distincti ve Bird species.

Animals are an important part of the food chain. This food chain shows how the Savanna Grasslands, Baobab Tree and Acacia Tree are primary producers. The Impala, Elephant and Giraffe are all Herbivores. The Lion and L eopard are Carnivores. The impala eats Savanna Grasses, the Elephant eats leaves from the Baobab Tree and Acacia tree and the Giraffe eats leaves from the Acacia tree. The Leopard eats Giraffe, Elephant and Impala and so does the Lion.

An ecosystem is the inter-relationship between the living (animals, plants, insects) and the non-living (air, rocks, water, soil) in an environment. The Savanna ecosystem in particular is very fragile, if any part of it is changed or affected by something it can have bad eff ects on the whole ecosystem. An example of this is if the Acacia trees are removed, the giraffe will result to eating the Baobab Trees. This will make less food for the Elephants and the Giraffes, decreasing population of both animals because of starvation . Because of the decreased amount of Elephants and Giraffes the Leopard and Lions will decrease in population and result in eating more Impala's Elephants and Giraffes.

The reason I mentioned the removal of Acacia Trees as an example, is because this is actually happening in Kenya today. Trees are being cut down for various things, and

people are not taking into consideration what it is doing to the ecosystem when they do this.

Acacia Trees are chopped down for various reasons:

- For Roads/Tracks
- To create Boats
- To clear areas for hotels/lodges
- As building materials for construction, for the hotels/lodges
- Furniture (locally made)
- Firewood

All of these reasons show that the Acacia tree is being removed.