

### **Biodiversity importance of Ol Ari Nyiro/Laikipia Nature Conservancy.**

Over the years, the conservancy has played a vital role in biodiversity conservation despite the challenges that come with it. It remains the only place worldwide where new species to science of a butterfly (*Aslauga gallmannae*), frog (*Tomopterna gallmanni*) and plant (*Aloe francombei*) have been recorded and collected.

On 21<sup>st</sup> May, 2016, the likely new species to science of a plant in the Rutaceae family (*Vepris* sp.) was found in fruit and thus increasing the chances of its description. It is a shrub growing to 2.5 metres and has yellow flowers. The plant will be examined by scientists at the East African Herbarium (National Museums of Kenya - NMK) and other plant taxonomists before the process of its description commences. Although the same plant has been collected previously to the north of this conservancy, none of the collections held at NMK bears fruits. In addition, it is only in LNC where the plant exists under a protected area thus the fate of other populations elsewhere is uncertain.

The conservancy is home to not only these endemic species of plants, but also other threatened ones such as the Red Cedar (*Juniperus procera*).



*Vepris* sp. (photos: Kennedy Matheka NMK)