African IBA monitoring project looks to sustainable future

Title The fourth and final Planning and Review Meeting of an EC-funded RSPB/BirdLife initiative to implement monitoring of IBAs in Africa was held in Bujumbura, Burundi, in March 2011. The meeting was hosted at national level by the BirdLife Partner in Burundi, Association Burundaise pour Oiseaux, and attended by at least 20 participants from seven countries ? Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The project, ?Instituting Effective Monitoring of Protected Areas (Important Bird Areas) as a Contribution to Reducing the Rate of Biodiversity Loss in Africa?, aims to empower biodiversity-rich and resource-poor African countries to meet their Convention of Biological Diversity obligations, especially the CBD programme of work on Protected Areas. This obliges signatories to ensure that national and regional systems are established to enable effective monitoring of protected-area coverage. The meeting was officially opened by the Director General of National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA), Dr. Vincent Muhitira., who said that the meeting was not only a planning session but a celebration of the achievements so far. The RSPB Project Supervisor Dr. Chris Magin extended his gratitude to the EC for funding the monitoring initiative across Africa, and for their continued guidance and technical support to the project. He also acknowledged all the local communities, NGOs and Protected Areas agencies that have dedicated time and effort to monitoring sites in Africa. The meeting discussed major achievements of the project during 2010, major problems encountered, and recommendations for improving project performance. A consolidated workplan for the remainder of the project was presented, focusing on key deliverables and how to attain the intended results. Delegates also discussed the specific technical assistance required in 2011, and sustainability plans for IBA monitoring in Africa, inclusive of fundraising. A field trip was conducted to Rusizi Nature Reserve IBA, a site located north-west of Bujumbura against the international frontier with DR Congo. The site supports a wide diversity ofwaterbirds, particularly migrant species. ABO is currently monitoring this and four other IBAs in Burundi (Rwihinda Lake Managed Nature Reserve, Kibira National Park, Ruvubu National Park and Bururi Forest Nature Reserve). For more details contact: Thandiwe.Chikomo@birdlife.org