

BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat joins Mount Kenya Site Support Group to celebrate World Migratory Bird Day (WBMD) marked on 12th to 13th of May, 2012.

Title Each year around the world, people come together to celebrate World Migratory Bird Day to raise awareness on the protection of migratory birds. This year's 2012 theme for World Migratory Bird Day is "Migratory birds and people- together through time". Migratory birds and people are inseparably connected in many different ways but human activities like excessive land use, unsustainable hunting, poor agricultural practices, industrial pollution and many other activities now gravely threaten migratory birds around the world. WBMD strives towards preserving the cultural ties people have with migratory birds and the vital economic and environmental benefits they sustain. WBMD is an important event in the BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat calendar of events and this year, staff led by Regional Director for Africa, Dr. Julius Arinaitwe, took time off their busy schedule to mark WBMD in Mount Kenya Forest, one of Kenya's top water towers and an Important Bird Area (IBA). This event was hosted by the Mt Kenya community SSG. The SSG was represented by 3 groups; the Mt. Kenya biodiversity conservation group, Baguretti ecotourism club and Baguretti conservation youth club each with a membership of at least 60 people. The events kicked off with Bird watching through the forest with team leaders leading four groups. Several bird species were sighted among them the *Cinnamon chested bee eater*, *Grey headed Bush-shrike*, *Grey Apalis*, *African Harrier Hawk*, *Speckled Mouse bird*, *Variable sunbird*, *Purple Grenadier*, *Red eyed dove* and many more. At least 30 species were sighted. Participants also took part in planting trees with various species being planted in the forest. At least 100 seedlings were planted. All this activities were aimed at the protection of the forest which is an important IBA.

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<http://www.birdlife.org/community/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/MT-2-300x225.jpg>



BirdLife Staff and Mt. Kenya communities
during bird watching

The site support group is involved in various conservation activities like bee keeping, ecotourism where they have put up a camp site, bamboo farming, farm forestry and production of energy saving jikos for the adjacent communities. Most of the activities have been supported by BirdLife International through our partners Nature Kenya. The leaders of the conservation groups gave talks on conservation issues and the work they do for conservation. BirdLife staff also gave speeches on the importance of WMBD and values and importance of birds generally. The need to work with site support groups could not be overemphasized as they are very much core in driving BirdLife's conservation work. The groups were informed on their need to work with Nature Kenya closely and assurance was given for future support through our partner Nature Kenya. Several publications were also distributed by BirdLife to the groups most of them focusing on BirdLife's work in IBAs in Africa and conservation of birds in general. This event was made successful through support from the 'livelihoods project' funded by AECID. We thus want to thank the Spanish Embassy (AECID) for their continued support in BirdLife's conservation work.