

# BirdLife Partnership welcomes Serengeti road decision

The BirdLife Partnership welcome the **announcement of the Tanzanian Government** that the proposed asphalt road which would have bisected the Serengeti National Park, will not now be built. " By taking this bold decision to protect the Serengeti, the government of Tanzania has once again demonstrated its commitment to sustainable management of the country's abundant biodiversity resources for the good of current and future generations of Tanzanians. Last year, the country received a top award for best practice in management of Lake Natron. Says **Victoria Ferdinand**, the Acting CEO of the **Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania (BirdLife in Tanzania)**. "The practice on the ground must adhere to this decision with TANAPA effectively controlling the traffic allowed into the Park. "This is a welcome decision for Serengeti, however, the area that requires attention for now is Lake Natron," said **Lota Melamari** Former CEO of the **Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania (BirdLife in Tanzania)**. " I see the risk of the new road to Loliondo serving as an incentive to fast track the soda ash mining project at Lake Natron. Conservation of Lake Natron is therefore going to be an even bigger challenge" "This is a very welcome step in the right direction" said **Thomas Tennhardt**, Vice President of **NABU (BirdLife in Germany)**. "We congratulate the Tanzanian Government and encourage them to consider the road to the South to ensure a sustainable long-term solution. As well as reducing impacts on wildlife, it would also be of considerably greater benefit to local communities. Coupled with an extension to the East of the Serengeti, it would also address the Tanzanian government's objective to connect isolated communities to commercial centres and road networks". **Dr Tim Stowe** for the **Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (BirdLife in the UK)** adds: "We are delighted the Tanzanian Government has decided to not build the road. We now encourage the Government to undertake a Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment of the Northern transport corridor route to assess alternatives which are likely to benefit the livelihoods of more communities without destroying the integrity of other important sites like Lake Natron. "The announcement at the World Heritage Committee session is a great advance and we warmly welcome the Tanzanian Government's far-sighted decision," said **Dr Julius Arinaitwe**, Director of the **BirdLife International African Partnership Secretariat** . "However, there are still serious concerns about traffic through the park after upgrade of the roads either side, which will need to be fully examined as the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment for the North route is finalised."