

A Chance for biodiversity in the Albertine Rift in the face of Climate Change

Biodiversity in Africa's Albertine Rift, especially birds, is set to benefit from a number of measures and actions by BirdLife International that are aimed at preparing them for Climate Change. Thanks to a project funded by the MacArthur Foundation, there is now a greater understanding of how birds will respond to climate change in the next 80 years. A majority of endemic birds in the Albertine Rift have been shown to be at high risk if nothing is done. Recently, project collaborators met for a workshop in Musanze, Rwanda, to discuss measures that may be needed to ensure the rare birds are more protected from climate change. More than 25 participants discussed a number of options, among them ensuring that monitoring of species is done to track their reaction to changing weather conditions in Echuya Forest in Uganda, Nyungwe National Park in Rwanda and Kibira National Park in Burundi. "We are working to ensure that there is connectivity of key habitats to facilitate the movement of birds", said Ken Mwathe - the BirdLife International Climate Change Project Manager. "This requires the working together of Government agencies, civil society and local communities". Finding solutions for birds in the face of climate change will also require innovative policy approaches. During the Musanze workshop, participants examined the existing policy documents, especially the National Adaptation Programmes of Actions (NAPAs) to assess the extent to which they cater for biodiversity. Jane Gaithuma, the Regional Policy and Advocacy Manager at the BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat said: "BirdLife is working to ensure that appropriate adaptation measures are included in Protected Area policy, and that the role of biodiversity and ecosystems within national adaptation policy planning is enhanced". Addressing the challenges posed by climate change cannot be successful without building the requisite capacity. The Project is supporting one Masters student from Makerere University who is being trained in monitoring the effects of birds on climate change. At the same time, Policy and Advocacy Officers from Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi were trained in policy analysis during the Musanze workshop. "It is gratifying to note that capacity building at national level is an integral part of this project. Biodiversity in the Albertine Rift has a future with the calibre of staff that this project is training" said Mr Serge Nsengimana, the CEO, ACNR, Rwanda, the host of the workshop. [BirdLife's Africa Climate exChange](#) is a one stop shop on information on climate change, mitigation and adaptation in Africa. Using birds and BirdLife's Important Bird Area network as entry points, it demonstrates how biodiversity in Africa will respond to climate change and what can be done. The [website](#) links to news and information on climate change in Africa and other parts of the world, including a growing library of 350 downloadable documents freely available. Maps for more than 1, 608 bird species breeding in sub-Saharan Africa are available showing how they could be impacted by

climate change.