

Title

We already know the winners of 'My Spring?' drawing competition in which took part children from 6 African countries: Botswana, Sierra Leone, Malawi, Nigeria, Uganda and Zimbabwe. The results were announced on the 14th of December. Now it is time to tell the story of their preparation for the competition. The drawing competition was organized in three stages. At the first stage, a series of educational activities focusing on the five migrant bird species for the Spring Alive was organized for students. This was then followed by a number of guided bird watching sessions during which the school children could easily see the spring messengers and record their first sightings of these species on the Spring Alive website (www.springalive.net). The final stage was drawing and coloring of the sighted bird species by individual children and the submission of completed entries to teachers who had volunteered to coordinate this activity in their respective schools. Evidently, both teachers and school children were very excited about the entire Spring Alive initiative and the drawing competition in particular. A number of interesting comments were gathered from both pupils and teachers. Most of these comments did not only express the joy of the entrants but also their appreciation of the relevance of participating in the drawing competition.



Children in Botswana working on their paintings © BirdLife Botswana

One of the entrants Teniola Disu, a 13yrs old pupil of Pinefields School, in Nigeria said that: *My participation in the drawing contest made me learn about these beautiful bird species and how I can care for them.* Jonathan Obi, a 10 years pupil of Kiddies Quest School also said: *I will always join my dad on his monthly bird expedition to know more things about this endowed creatures.* Kadison Augustine Maada Duwai, a student of Sierra Leone Grammar School also said that: *This is the first time that we are participating in this competition. I really enjoyed learning about these birds and how they travel very long distances between Africa and Europe. From now onwards I will become an ambassador for these birds and will protect them wherever I see them.*



Children on the school trip in Botswana © BirdLife Botswana

Ms Linda Mbaiwa, an Environmental Club Teacher at St Joseph's Primary School in Botswana also posited that: *We really enjoyed the bird walk, it was very interesting and we learnt a lot about identifying birds by looking and hearing the sounds they make. We actually got to see the European Bee-Eater, one of the Spring Alive messengers we learnt about.*

According to Ausward Bonongwe, the national Spring Alive focal point for Malawi: *Both teachers and their school kids were very happy to participate in the maiden edition of the Spring Alive drawing competition. It was fun sighting these birds and more exciting drawing them.* Summing up, the euphoria surrounding the 2012 edition of the competition has been so great with all entrants hoping to catch the ultimate prize when the final result of the competition is announced on the 14th of December, 2012. With the remarkable achievement for 2012, next year's edition will definitely be more exciting and promising. *Prepared on the basis of the report compiled by Callistus Agbaam, Project Officer, WCA Story also available on www.springalive.net*