IBA monitoring data will measure progress towards CBD targets

Title In a significant contribution to indicators that track trends in the rate of global biodiversity loss, the BirdLife Partnership has developed a standard framework for monitoring Important Bird Areas (IBAs). Data derived from monitoring IBAs will provide vital measures for assessing progress towards the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, (CBD) across a network of priority sites for biodiversity around the world. To date, over 10,000 IBAs of global significance have been identified in 204 countries or territories. The IBA framework is designed to be simple, sustainable and cost-effective, and to maximise local participation and institutional engagement. A paper published in the most recent issue of *Bird Conservation International* describes the approach, and how it was applied to show trends in IBAs in Kenya between 1999 and 2005. A simple methodology is used to assign scores (0?3) for the condition of IBAs (?State?), the threats they face (?Pressure?) and the conservation action being taken (?Response?). For example, ?Pressure? scores (where 0 is low and 3 very high) are calculated by assessing threats to the ?trigger? bird species that designate the IBA. ?Response? scores are the sum of the scores for three different types of action: the levels of formal protection, management planning and implementation of conservation action. The raw data are collected by field staff and community groups at IBAs, using a simple and robust system grounded in national and local institutions. Monitors based near or visiting the IBA fill in a form providing information on the site. The form is submitted to the National IBA Monitoring Coordinator, who verifies and assesses the forms for consistency, and then collates them. Finally, the Coordinator applies the standardised methodology to the available information, and, in consultation with other experts, assigns scores for State, Pressure and Response for each site. In Kenya, this scoring system was applied retrospectively using information in the national IBA directory (1999) and subsequent status reports (2004 and 2005). IBA indices for 36 IBAs show that their average condition deteriorated between 1999 and 2005, with the mean State score being between ?unfavourable? and ?near favourable?. Pressures on IBAs showed a slight decline in intensity, especially from 2004 to 2005, coinciding with an improvement in management that was reflected in increasing Response scores. Compared to unprotected IBAs, officially protected sites had substantially greater conservation responses underway, were subject to marginally lower pressures, and tended to be in slightly better condition. ?This national example for Kenya shows how the BirdLife IBA monitoring framework provides a robust way of tracking trends in the state of IBAs, the pressures upon them, and the responses in place?, said the paper?s lead author, BirdLife?s Kiragu Mwangi. ?The system is sensitive enough to detect differences between sites and over time, but simple enough to be implemented with

little training and without sophisticated technology. The results provide vital information for managers of individual protected areas, management agencies responsible for suites of sites, and national governments, and can be used to track progress in tackling the global biodiversity crisis.? ?The IBA monitoring framework is being implemented globally by the BirdLife Partnership and will make a significant contribution towards tracking the CBD 2020 target that seeks to ensure that important biodiversity areas are conserved through effectively managed protected areas? said one of the co-authors, Stuart Butchart, BirdLife?s Global Research and Indicators Coordinator. *Bird Conservation International* is the official journal of BirdLife International. It provides stimulating, up-to-date coverage of bird conservation topics important in today's world. For more information click here. To download the paper click here
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