

International Day for Biological Diversity in Sierra Leone by Daniel Siaffa

Title "Celebration of the International day for Biological Diversity (IDBD) came as a surprise to all Sierra Leoneans, especially the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL / BirdLife Partner)! CSSL had never celebrated this day as a separate event due to logistical constraints and the closeness of this day to the World Environment Day. However, this year, we celebrated the IDBD 2010 in a grand style, with school children, civil society members and the Sierra Leone Police Force being involved. The celebrations started with a street parade, involving school children, mostly from CSSL's School Nature Club, with a huge array of banners, placards and displays accompanying the parade. Other activities during the celebrations included community discussions and bird watching. Over 300,000 people lined the streets in support of the event, a massive captive audience! The event was an advocacy and awareness raising campaign, executed by CSSL's Nature Club Movement in collaboration with the Sierra Leone Environmental Protection Agency (SLEPA). Our principle aim was to raise awareness and enlighten school children and the public on pertinent environmental issues, with particular reference to biodiversity loss and its impact on Sierra Leoneans. The theme for this year's celebration was Biodiversity, Development and Poverty Alleviation. For Sierra Leone, it is very important that local communities recognise the value of sustainable use of natural resources ? especially forest and wetland resources. CSSL aims to instill widespread appreciation of sustainable-resource-use being to the benefit of people and their surrounding environment. In conclusion, the day was a resounding success, with a tremendous turnout and a significant impact made through the awareness raising campaign!"

To find out more about the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone [click here](#). Photo: The Anne Walsh memorial School Band