

Nairobi Convention COP 7 adopts a decision to conserve birds

Title

The Seventh Conference of Parties (COP 7) of the Nairobi Convention ended on 14th December with a COP Decision to designate Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in the territories of the Contracting Parties as a tool for conservation of marine and coastal ecosystems, and to use information on birds as indicators of ecosystem health. The decision also requested the Secretariat of the Nairobi Convention, in collaboration with the Contracting Parties, to review the Convention's *Protocol Concerning Protected Areas and Wild Fauna and Flora in the East Africa Region*.

Formal recognition of marine IBAs in the Convention region and review of the protocol were two of the recommendations documented in the regional synthesis report on the *status of birds and their habitats in the Western Indian Ocean* developed through a project led by BirdLife Africa Partnership in collaboration with the Nairobi Convention Secretariat.

The synthesis report and [BirdLife presentation](#) at the COP created much needed awareness on bird conservation as indicator of the wider ecosystems health, especially now that oil and gas is gaining momentum in national and regional development agenda. This COP Decision presents a unique opportunity to scale up bird conservation and institutionalised BirdLife's IBA Programme in the region (Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, South Africa, Seychelles, Mauritius, Reunion (France), Madagascar and Comoros). "The task of reviewing the protocol and strengthening bird and biodiversity conservation calls for partnership between the Convention Secretariat, the Contracting Parties and partners to achieve the aim of the COP Decisions in the coming years" said Ademola Ajagbe, Regional Science and IBA Programme Manager during the closing session of the COP.