

Title

Three new African countries namely Kenya, Rwanda and Zambia have joined the Spring Alive initiative for the 2013 season which duly commences on the 1st of September, 2013. These latest additions therefore increase the total number of African countries participating in the initiative from eight in 2012 to eleven in 2013. This remarkable achievement is in furtherance of BirdLife Africa's vision of expanding the programme into many Africa countries and also increasing the constituency of young people engaged in activities that promote bird awareness and conservation in general.

As part of the initiative, individual country web pages have been created for each new country on the international Spring Alive website- www.springalive.net. Therefore children, youth, teachers and bird lovers in Kenya, Rwanda and Zambia will now be able to gain access to a host of education materials that center on the five flagship species under the initiative. More so, children in these countries can also observe and record the arrival of the five flagship species each year on their home country web pages and participate in the Spring Alive drawing competition for Africa.

Furthermore, opportunities also exist for schools /clubs in Africa to build strong linkages or networks with their European counterparts under the Spring Twins component of the initiative. In all, it is expected that by joining the initiative children and bird lovers in all these countries will have the opportunity to experience spring in a very unique way through the host of activities available under the initiative and consequently enhance their interest and love for birds and nature in general.

The Spring Alive is an international project organised by BirdLife International, designed to promote children's interest in nature and its conservation by highlighting the arrival of spring. The core component of Spring Alive is a mass-participation website that is implemented in all partner countries. Citizens, but specifically children and families, are encouraged to observe and record the arrival of 5 migratory bird species each year: White Stork, Barn Swallow, Common Swift, Common Cuckoo and Eurasian Bee-eater.

Spring Alive is mainly sponsored by The Mitsubishi Corporation Fund for Europe and Africa (MCFEA). The aims of the MCFEA are to encourage the appreciation and conservation of flora and fauna with an emphasis on endangered species.

The campaign is also financially supported by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB; BirdLife in the UK) BirdLife in the UK.

By Callistus Agbaam, Project Officer- Wildlife Clubs of Africa Project (Phase II)

