

Touching lives through conservation project

Title

A team of BirdLife International and Fondation NATURAMA (BirdLife Partner in Burkina Faso) visited Oursi Lake recently to assess the impact of small scale funding received from Ricoh to support the rehabilitation of Oursi Lake ecosystem and improve livelihoods. Oursi is one of the most important wetland in Burkina Faso located about 450km from Ouagadougou. The lake is a major refuge for biodiversity in this Sahel zone and has bird assemblage of over 100 species including 27 Palearctic migrants.

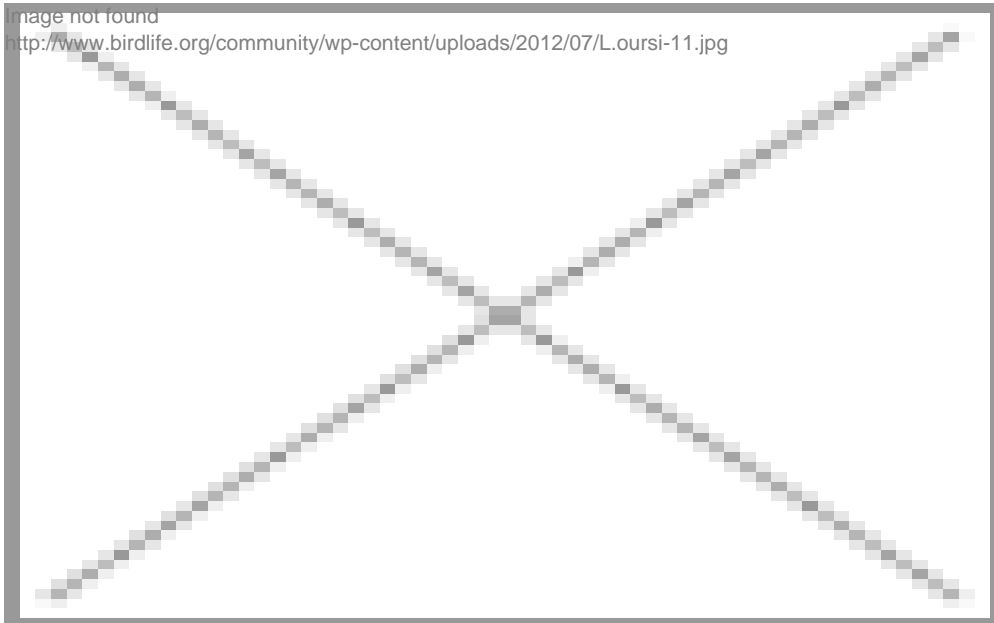
The impact of the Ricoh grant in Oursi is far reaching and mind boggling. One of the two community boreholes was rehabilitated through the grant to provide water for the nearby tree nursery. The borehole now serves the nursery and provides portable water to the entire community of over 2,000 people saving lives and livelihoods from unforgiving water borne diseases. Pupils from the primary school adjacent to the borehole could not hide their joy when they noticed our presence. They stormed us to say a big thank you in their own way for the “NATURAMA borehole” as it is popularly known. What an amazement to see conservation project touch the lives of thousands of people.



Community members fetching water from the borehole. Photo by Ademola Ajagbe

The Site Support Group (SSG) in Oursi is unique in more than one way. The group comprise agile and bright minds with an exceptional commitment to biodiversity conservation and local capacity development. They are vast in bird ringing, biodiversity monitoring, and use their entrepreneurial skills to optimise the little support they have received thus far.

Plans are underway to complement Ricoh annual grant for 2012 with additional funding from Ann Scott, wife of late Bob Scott who was the former Head of Reserves at RSPB and a keen ornithologist. Ann formed a small group of volunteers to launch an ambitious appeal to raise funds for habitat restoration work to conserve Trans-Saharan migrant birds. The aim is to turn Bob's early death into a conservation win for birds.



A huge flock of Cattle Egrets clouds tree stands at the bank of the Oursi Lake. Photo by Ademola Ajagbe