

Waterbird Watching during World Wetlands Day in Botswana

Title World Wetlands Day has been commemorated on 2 February every year since 1997. This year, BirdLife Botswana (BLB) celebrated this commemorative day with 23 primary school children and teachers from Diphetogo Primary School and Mogoditshane Primary School in Gaborone Game Reserve. BLB took this opportunity to raise awareness and understanding of school children about wetlands and water birds, through bird watching. The visit started with a briefing on the origin of World Wetlands Day and objective of the commemorative event. BirdLife Botswana birding specialists took children to the water-holes to watch various aquatic birds in the Game Reserve. The biodiversity at the waterhole amazed children who had actually never visited the Reserve before. With their eyes shining, they were so excited to see and listen to the calls of approximately 50 bird species such as Egyptian Goose, *Sehudi* in Setswana, Hamerkop *Mmamasiolanoka*, Hadedda Ibis *Tshababarwa*, and African Sacred Ibis *Kokolohutwe*. "Birds serve as one of the best indicators of the state of the environment, both in Setswana culture and scientifically. It is therefore important that, from an early age, our children are made aware of the role birds play in the environment", said Dr. Kabelo Senyatso, BirdLife Botswana's Director. After the tour, children enjoyed their picnic at the recreational area. Gaborone Game Reserve is a very convenient and ideal destination which provides abundant wildlife and plant resources for environmental education.