

# Got a conservation emergency? Now there's help

## Title

In September 2010, an oil spill on the River Nile released 130 tons of diesel into the water near Aswan. It soon became clear that the site of the spill was very close to part of the tentative natural World Heritage site, [Bird Migration Routes](#). This site is of the utmost importance for a number of migratory bird species such as Ferruginous Duck, and came at a time when approximately 20,000 birds would start to arrive in the area for winter. Haitham Ibrahim, an alumnus of the Conservation Leadership Programme (CLP), used the skills he amassed during his CLP International Training to successfully apply for and implement a grant awarded through the Rapid Response Facility (RRF). The RRF is a small grants facility, focusing on UNESCO natural World Heritage sites, which responds to applications for urgent support within an average of eight working days, and ensures successful grantees receive their money as soon as possible after that. This rapid intervention has provided support to numerous sites of biodiversity importance, such as Comoé National Park in Côte d'Ivoire and the Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System. Focal species of grants have included Bengal Florican and Brazilian Merganser. Knowing that funds would be slower to mobilise in the government department in which he was working, Haitham contacted the RRF and his application was successful due to the simple but effective solutions he presented to counteract the threats to birdlife on the River Nile. These included physically removing oil from the water using locally sourced materials and undertaking a winter 2010/11 bird count to assess the effects of the diesel spill and potentially propose the site as an Important Bird Area (IBA). The long-term effects of the diesel spill have been reduced by a combination of Haitham's fast action and the RRF's ability to send funds quickly to where they are needed urgently. Haitham says "the grant make us feel that we are able to help and react with the biodiversity loss problems in Egypt." BirdLife partners are encouraged to consider the RRF in times of emergency threat to the biodiversity of any natural World Heritage sites in which they are working. Haitham has the following advice: "I would recommend contacting the RRF for any disaster affects the biodiversity and need a quick action and respond. You can contact them immediately and get their help in developing the application which is very simple." Visit the RRF website at [www.rapid-response.org](http://www.rapid-response.org) for more detailed information and make enquiries to the [RRF Secretariat](#). The Secretariat urges potential applicants to make enquiries to receive guidance before submitting a full application. Applications and enquiries can be made in French, Spanish and English. The Conservation Leadership Programme (CLP) is a partnership initiative of four conservation organisations including BirdLife International, Conservation International, Fauna & Flora International and the Wildlife Conservation Society. By providing a range of awards, training, mentoring and ongoing support, the CLP promotes the development of future conservation leaders and provides them with the capacity to

address the most significant conservation issues of our time.