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Message from the CAP chair

Dear BirdLife Africa family members,

The BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat will be working soon with the network in the region to evaluate progress towards meeting the targets we set ourselves in the 2004-2008 Regional Programme. Furthermore, the process of developing the next BirdLife Africa Strategy for 2009-2012 and getting it endorsed by CAP 2007 is high on the agenda of the BirdLife Africa Partnership in 2007.

In view of that, the BirdLife Africa Secretariat is undertaking an evaluation of the current programme to document if there are any gaps. This will be circulated to Partners for scrutinizing and additional inputs before small working groups are set up to develop the new programmes for the four themes in the programme, i.e., species, sites, habitats and people. As point of action, the Secretariat will contact the Directors of Partner NGOs to nominate focal points that serve as members in each of the working groups.

To this effect, may I take the liberty to strongly urge you to tighten your belts and delegate competent focal points that can play a crucial role in the development of a sound draft programme that will be presented to CAP 2007?

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all the best of luck and success in meeting the targets and conservation objectives that we have, and will, set ourselves this year.

Mengistu Wondafrash, Chair of CAP

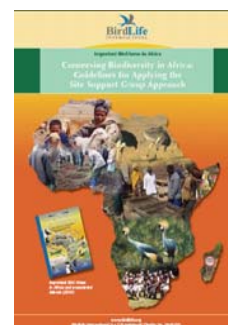
More Lessons Learnt!

The Site Support Group manual – now available!

The long-awaited Site Support Group manual is here! It is available in English and French, in hardcopy and as a pdf and it can be downloaded from the BirdLife website:

www.birdlife.org/news/news/2007/03/successful_ssg_support.html

The manual provides lessons learnt, best practices and advise about the establishment, management, and sustainability of the Site Support Group (also known as 'Local Conservation Group') approach in Africa.



Although the focus is on Africa, the manual entitled 'Conserving Biodiversity In Africa: Guidelines for applying the Site Support Group Approach' will be equally useful to Partners on other continents.

Please use it widely!

For more information or copies, please contact julius.arinaitwe@birdlife.or.ke

(for more 'lessons learnt', see the previous edition of the BirdLife Africa e-bulletin)

Hot news!

The rarest birds in the Middle East tracked into Africa: see www.birdlife.org/news/news/2007/03/bald_ibis_returns.html

CONTRIBUTION OF ARTICLES

We welcome contributions to the e-bulletin from the BirdLife Africa network about bird species, sites, habitats and people. We would also be happy to know about conservation-related events at global, regional, national levels being organized within the network. Please send your contributions or comments to: antoinette.otieno@birdlife.or.ke.

REGIONAL INITIATIVES

'Common Bird' Monitoring

How much 'common bird' monitoring is being done across Africa?

'Keeping common birds common through reducing their decline' is a key global objective of BirdLife International. 'Common birds' here refer to bird species not necessarily globally threatened, but of conservation interest - the everyday birds around us, in both altered and natural habitats, whose populations we want to maintain. Regionally, the BirdLife Africa conservation programme intends to 'Obtain baseline information and monitor the status of selected common bird species at national level'.

Monitoring common birds would, among others, help in detecting and reversing declines in common species and wild bird populations would be used to indicate change in the wider environment, especially at the habitat level.

During the annual meeting of the BirdLife Council of the Africa Partnership in 2006 (CAP 2006), delegates agreed on a need to monitor common birds in Africa. However, a wide range of 'common' bird monitoring activities takes place in Africa. Therefore, seeking a common ground from the existing activities and build upon them to come up with a coordinated system of monitoring common birds in Africa was the first step that needed to be taken. As a start, a quick review of bird monitoring activities in 13 BirdLife network countries in Africa was carried out by the BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat between August and November 2006.

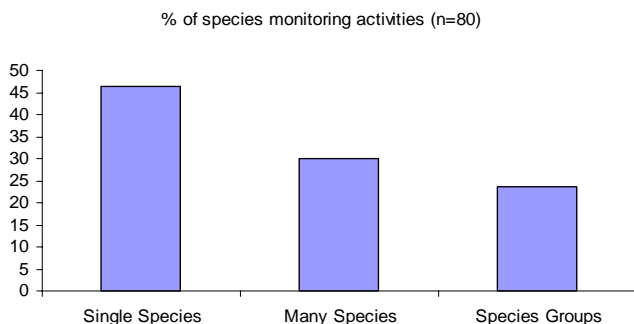


Figure 1: The three groups of species monitoring activities across the 13 BirdLife Africa network countries

This review revealed interesting results:

- There is a wide range of bird monitoring activities in Africa, with 80 such activities recorded in this review, most of them project-based, isolated, small-scale and in a few cases inconsistent.
- Most (46%) of the activities involve monitoring of *single species*, while others involve *many species* (30%) The rest (24%) involved monitoring *particular bird groups* e.g. waterbirds, vultures, flamingos, large birds etc (Fig. 1 & 2).

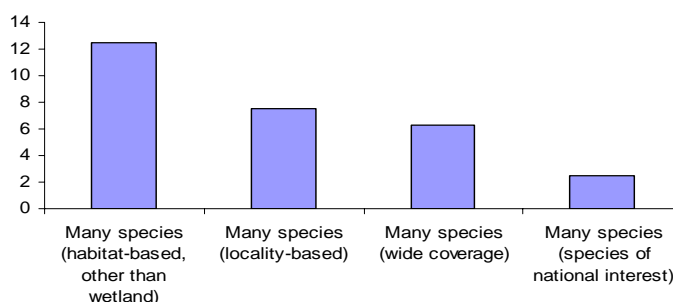


Figure 2: The various types of 'Many species' (making 24 % of all) monitoring activities

- The most commonly monitored group of birds are *the waterbirds* (19% of activities).
- The Shoebill *Balaeniceps rex*, Wattled Crane *Grus carunculatus* and Grauer's Scrub-warbler *Bradypterus graueri* (though not necessarily common) are the most popularly monitored single-species, with each being having at least three separate monitoring activities happening in different places.
- Apart from waterbird counts, most of the other activities are not coordinated across the continent.

Based on this review, it seems possible that with some effort and resources, coordination of a common bird monitoring system across Africa could be achieved! The BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat is working towards this dream and would be delighted to receive any further input to make it happen.

For more information or contributions, contact paul.ndanganga@birdlife.or.ke

For more info on the world's waterbirds, see www.birdlife.org/news/news/2007/03/waterbirds_around_the_world.html

Adapting to Climate Change A new BirdLife project in Africa

The BirdLife International Africa Partnership Secretariat,



together with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB, BirdLife in the UK) and Durham University (UK), recently managed to secure a USD 250,000 grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. This contribution will support a two-year BirdLife project that aims to ensure that the Important Bird Area (IBA) network in Africa will be capable of adapting to changing circumstances, caused by projected climate change, and will remain host to some of the world's most precious birds and biodiversity.

The project will use birds as indicators. Birds are not only well-established indicators of biodiversity, but they can also serve as an 'early warning system' of changes to the stability of ecosystems. This project will use models of predicted changes in the 'climate envelopes' (the range of climate conditions within which the species occurs) of bird species to assess the impacts of climate change on the functioning of the Important Bird Areas network in Africa.

As one of the key outputs, the project will deliver a pan-African Adaptive Management Framework (consisting of a suite of options and recommendations for adapting the IBA network to minimise the impacts of climate change). Practical implementation of this Adaptive Management Framework will be piloted in a selected high-biodiversity region of Africa, the Albertine Rift. A second key output of the project will be the creation of a low-cost, easy-access knowledge-exchange network that will support stakeholders in Africa to cope with the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and livelihoods in the long term.

The project will start in April 2007.

For more information, contact julius.arinaitwe@birdlife.or.ke

Funded by **MACARTHUR**
The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

DATA ZONE

Some useful sources of information

Malimbus magazine

The full text of Malimbus Volume 25 is now available from the West African Ornithological Society's website at <http://malimbus.free.fr>. It joins the previous 24 volumes, so all volumes 1-25 can now be consulted there: pdfs of 3,040 pages, 198 papers, 48 issues to read and download, guided by an index of 1,200 species.

For more information, please contact Peter Browne, Webmaster for WAOS, at pbrowne@primus.ca

NEWS

Large birds vanishing from West African Sahel - see www.birdlife.org/news/news/2007/01/sahel_declines.html

AfDev Info

AfDevInfo is a new service tracking the mechanics of political and economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa. Their download site, www.afdevinfo.com has recently been launched. The service is free to subscribers from Africa.

For further information contact Bill Anderson at bill.a@afdevinfo.org

State of the World's Forests 2007

The seventh edition of *State of the World's Forests* examines progress towards sustainable forest management. Part I reviews progress region by region. Each regional report is structured according to the seven thematic elements agreed by international fora as a framework for sustainable forest management. Part II presents selected issues in the forest sector, probing the state of knowledge or recent activities in 18 topics of interest to forestry. Climate change, forest landscape restoration, forest tenure, invasive species, wildlife management and wood energy are just a sampling of the subjects covered.

For more information and downloading of the document, see www.fao.org/docrep/009/a0773e/a0773e00.htm

NEWS FROM THE NETWORK

Zambia

The first Microlight Shoebill Survey



Shoebill (photo Greg Johnston)

In Zambia, the home of the enigmatic and much sought-after Shoebill *Balaeniceps rex* is the Bangweulu Swamps, a vast wetland area in the north-east of the country. This is where, in July 2006, the Zambian Ornithological Society (BirdLife in Zambia) conducted the first aerial survey of shoebills using a microlight aircraft. Sometimes referred to as 'a lawnmower with wings' these small experimental aircraft are ideal for survey work in many respects: they fly slow and low and are completely open, giving a full 360° view.

Using Shoebill Island Camp as our base in the south of the swamps, we flew several transects in order to count Shoebills and ultimately estimate the population size. Previous surveys have estimated that the population size is around 200 birds, but they counted Shoebills as a by-product of counting Wattled Cranes and Black Lechwe, both of which occur in large groups, unlike Shoebills which occur alone or in pairs.

In our Shoebill-focused survey, we estimated that the population size in the survey area alone lies between 240 and 530 birds. This does not imply that the Shoebill population has increased, but rather that previous estimates were too low, due to less species-specific survey methods.

Unfortunately, the Bangweulu Swamps is not a national park despite its biodiversity importance – at least two endemic antelope species occur here as well, as well as large population of waterbirds. Unsustainable fishing practices along with poaching of large mammals are threatening this important wetland area. The budding tourism development and expansion of human habitation require ecologically-founded land management guidelines which protect the natural environment of the Bangweulu swamps and at the same time take the requirements of its human population into account. Therefore more applied, conservation-related field research will be needed, in particular to ensure the survival of this important population of Shoebills.

This survey was financed by Wetlands International through a Small Grant Fund provided by the Secretariat of the African Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA).



For more information please contact Lizanne Roxburgh at lizanne@coppernet.zm

*The microlight ready for an early morning take-off
(photo L. Roxburgh)*



Seychelles

Nature Seychelles joins Flycatcher SOS

Nature Seychelles, BirdLife in the Seychelles, is engaged in a project to rescue the Seychelles Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone corvina*, the last of the Indian Ocean archipelago's endemic land birds listed as Critically Endangered by the World Conservation Union (IUCN).

The Paradise Flycatcher population currently stands at only 200 individuals and the species' status as Critically Endangered is further compounded by its restricted habitat range, limited to a small reserve area on the 160 hectare plateau of the Seychelles' island La Digue. Tourism to La Digue is growing, increasing competition for land between the island's 2,500 inhabitants and the Paradise Flycatchers, and prompting Nature Seychelles and its partners to take action.



Darwin Initiative

The three year Paradise Flycatcher project, led by the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology (DICE) at the University of Kent and Nature Seychelles, will cost £200,000 to implement, the majority of which will be provided by the Darwin Initiative of the UK Government.

Staff working on the project will enter into discussions with conservationists and the people of La Digue to assess how best to safeguard the future of the Paradise Flycatcher, without diminishing its role as a major tourist attraction. One option under consideration is the possible translocation of a seed population to Denis Island, some 60 kilometres from La Digue. Denis Island has no resident population and rats and cats have been eradicated from the island, which is now a safe haven for a number of Seychelles endemic landbirds.

In addition the project will involve an assessment of the socio-economic importance of the Flycatchers to La Digue and to Seychelles, as part of an initiative to increase the importance placed on the conservation and protection of local ecosystems.

Nature Seychelles has previously been instrumental in rescuing the Seychelles Magpie Robin, Seychelles Fody, Seychelles White-eye and Seychelles Warbler, all of which have been translocated between islands.

The official launch of the project took place in December at the Nature Seychelles Centre for Environment and Education.

The first activity carried out under the Paradise Flycatcher project was a week-long workshop to train a wide range of those involved in workshop facilitation, in an effort to equip people more used to dealing with animals with the skills needed to successfully handle that most difficult species, other people.

For more information, contact Nature Seychelles at nature@seychelles.net



See also www.birdlife.org/news/news/2007/01/seychelles_paradise-flycatcher.html

Senegal

Expedition solves Aquatic Warbler mystery

After five years of investigations, an expedition team has tracked down the wintering grounds of Europe's most threatened migratory songbird – the Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola* – in Senegal. The team consisted of researchers from the BirdLife International Aquatic Warbler Conservation Team (AWCT) supported by staff from Senegalese and Mauritanian National Parks. The expedition discovered good numbers of aquatic warblers in an area of about 100 square kilometres within the Djoudj National Park, an Important Bird Area (IBA) in north-west Senegal. Preliminary estimates range from 5-10,000 birds at this single site. Aquatic Warbler has declined dramatically in Europe over the last century, and its global population is now down to 15,000 pairs – largely because of drainage of its wetland nesting sites. An estimated 95% of habitat has been lost in the last century (see also articles in previous BirdLife Africa e-bulletins). Future work in the field and with satellite maps will help identify other potential sites in southern Mauritania and elsewhere in western Africa.

The expedition was financially supported by the RSPB, the UK government (DEFRA), the Bonn Convention (CMS), and the German Ornithologists' Society (DO-G).



RSPB



DEFRA



CMS



DO-G

See also www.birdlife.org/news/news/2007/02/aquatic_warbler_senegal.html

Uganda

Campaign to protect Uganda's Forest Reserves

NatureUganda (BirdLife in Uganda) is one of a number of organisations putting forward their defence to the Ugandan government over the apparent 'give-away' of gazetted forest reserves for large-scale production of sugarcane and palm oil. As far as conservation agencies are aware, the Ugandan government intends to allocate around 7,100 ha (roughly 25%) of Mabira Forest Reserve to the Sugar Corporation of Uganda Limited to expand sugar cane production. Meanwhile, in the Ssesse Islands in Lake Victoria, the Ugandan government is allocating parts of the Bugala Forest Reserve to the Bidco Palm Oil Company. Both these forests are listed by BirdLife International as Important Bird Areas.

Mabira Forest Reserve contains over 300 species of bird, including the Endangered Nahan's Francolin *Francolinus nahani*. It also supports nine species of primate, a recently identified new mangabey subspecies in Uganda, *Lophocebus albigena johnstoni* and a new species of Short-tailed Fruit Bat.

Studies have shown that the potential revenue from tourism alone at Mabira exceeds the costs of managing the Reserve. Mabira Forest Reserve is located approximately 50 km from Kampala, the capital city of Uganda, and is surrounded by four major towns used by tourists. Supported by the RSPB (BirdLife in the UK), NatureUganda is now conducting a more in-depth economic valuation of Mabira Forest Reserve, based in part on the technical information developed as part of BirdLife's Important Bird Area Programme.

On the advocacy front, NatureUganda has also been organising a series of public discussion and stakeholders meetings about the issues; is writing a statement to Parliament; and is organising a visit to the Ssesse Islands for the parliamentary Natural Resources Committee of MPs.

For more information, please contact achilles.byaruhanga@natureuganda.org

See also www.birdlife.org/news/news/2007/03/mabira_forest_giveaways.html

More Lessons Learnt!

Conservation at Arabuko-Sokoke Forest in Kenya: successes and lessons learnt

A pre-publication

Recently a study, funded by USAID in Nairobi, has been completed to compile the lessons learnt from one of BirdLife's longest-lasting projects in Africa: the Arabuko-Sokoke Forest (ASF) project in Kenya. ASF is a priority IBA in Kenya and the largest extant block of the East African coastal forests. Through projects funded by a number of funding agencies, implemented by BirdLife International and, later, by NatureKenya (BirdLife in Kenya), huge gains have been made over the last twenty years.

Successes

Firstly, there is improved *governance* through the formation of an ASF Management Team comprising of various Government departments and parastatals, the formulation of a 25-year Strategic Management Plan in 2002, and the establishment of an active ASF Adjacent Dwellers Association. Secondly, a wide array of rather successful *income-generating activities* have been established, including the award-winning Kipepeo project (see also www.kipepeo.org). Thirdly, *ecotourism and environmental education* have been enhanced mainly through the vibrant ASF Guides Association and a unique Schools and Ecotourism Scheme run by A Rocha Kenya. Fourthly, various *community development initiatives* have been initiated including water provision, farmer field schools, and Natural Resource and Participatory Forest Management schemes.

Lessons learnt

Together, these activities have had an enormous effect on community attitudes towards conservation, transforming previous antagonists into strong proponents. Still, like in most integrated conservation and development projects, it remains rather difficult to determine the impact these initiatives have had on biodiversity conservation. Suitable baseline data are lacking and consistent monitoring for most flora and fauna did not take place. Therefore, demonstrating the link between conservation and development at ASF still remains a key challenge – a challenge which many BirdLife Partners face in similar projects.

The full report will be available shortly.

For more information, please contact Paul Matiku at director_naturekenya@mitsuminet.com

(with thanks to Mwangi Githiru)



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

SCB membership for free!

The Nature Conservancy is sponsoring two-year memberships of the Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) for persons in developing countries. Membership includes on-line access to Conservation Biology, Biological Conservation, and other journals. Be quick: when the money is gone, the offer will end. See www.conbio.org

The Crawford Fund: Derek Tribe Award Nomination deadline: 2 April

The Derek Tribe Award is made biennially to a citizen of a developing country in recognition of their distinguished contributions to the application of research in agriculture or natural resource management. A seminar, keynote speech (the Award Address) and a networking visit to Australia are all part of the Award. Nomination forms can be downloaded from www.crawfordfund.org/events/index.htm

Borlaug Fellowships Program 2007: African Women in Science Deadline: 2 April

The Borlaug Fellows Program is open for female citizens of Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Uganda, Zambia, Niger, and Malawi. It offers training and collaborative research opportunities in international agricultural science, leadership and policy. Priority research areas include forestry and natural resources. See also www.fas.usda.gov/icd/borlaug/westafrica.htm

IUCN Alcoa Foundation Conservation and Sustainability Fellowship Application deadline: 31 May

IUCN offers fellowships for applied research in key IUCN areas, including 'Biodiversity and Alternative New Forms of Energy', 'Review and Synthesis of Corporate Biodiversity Management and Reporting Systems' and 'Biomimicry - The Use of Biological Systems to Help Design New Approaches to Sustainability'. See www.alcoafoundationfellows.org/page/pf2007

NEWS!

Madagascar protects wetlands crucial for people and birds

www.birdlife.org/news/news/2007/01/madagascar_wetlands.html

CEPF Eastern Arc and Coastal Forests Rolling deadline

On behalf of the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), BirdLife is administering a Small Grants fund for postgraduate student research in the Eastern Arc Mountains and Coastal Forests of Kenya and Tanzania. Please see www.birdlife.org/jobs/details/cepf_small_grants.html for more information.

African Development Foundation Rolling deadline

ADF provides small grants of US\$250,000 or less to private and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Africa to:

- finance sustainable poverty alleviating initiatives that are conceived, designed, and implemented by Africans and aimed at enlarging opportunities for community development;
- stimulate and expand the participation of Africa's economically poor in the development of their countries; and
- build sustainable African institutions that foster grassroots development.

ADF only provides funding to organisations based in African countries where it works, which currently are: Benin, Botswana, Cape Verde, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Contact info@adf.gov or see the ADF website www.adf.gov/index.html

Find more guidelines on how to write a winning proposal at:

www.genderdiversity.cgiar.org/Newsletter/Tipsforgoodproposal.doc

For tips on publishing and presentations:

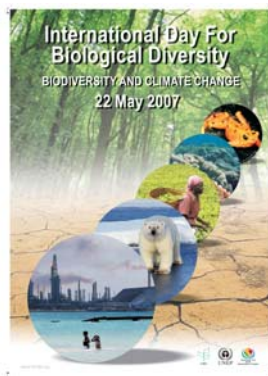
www.genderdiversity.cgiar.org/Cast_the_net/PUBLISHINGTIPS.pdf

UPCOMING EVENTS

2 - 5 April 2007: 8th session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group II
Brussels, Belgium.
Contact Renate Christ at ipcc_sec@wmo.int,
Secretary to the IPCC

30 April – 11 May: 15th Session of UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)
New York, USA. Focus will continue to be on Energy for Sustainable Development, Industrial Development, Air Pollution and Climate Change.
See www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/policy.htm

12-13 May: World Migratory Bird Day
The theme for 2007 will be "Migratory birds in a changing climate".
Organized by UNEP/AEWA and UNEP/CMS. Register your event on www.worldmigratorybirdday.org



22 May 2007: International Day for Biological Diversity (IBD): Biodiversity and Climate Change
Organized by the Convention on Biological Diversity.
Contact secretariat@biodiv.org
Or see the web www.biodiv.org

3-15 June 2007: 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES
The Hague, Netherlands.
Contact CITES Secretariat at cites@unep.ch

5 June 2007: World Environment Day
Theme: Melting Ice - A Hot Topic?
Organized by UNEP.
Contact elisabeth.guilbaud-cox@unep.org
Web www.unep.org/wed/2007

1-5 July: 21st Annual meeting of the Society for Conservation Biology (SCB)
Port Elizabeth, South Africa. The theme of the meeting is "One World, One Conservation, One Partnership".
See also www.nmmu.ac.za/scb

6 - 7 September 2007: Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) 32nd Meeting of the Standing Committee
Bonn, Germany.
Contact secretariat@cms.int



15-19 OCTOBER 2007: COUNCIL FOR THE AFRICA PARTNERSHIP MEETING

The tenth CAP meeting, in conjunction with the BirdLife Global Council Meeting
Nairobi, Kenya.
Contact hazell.thompson@birdlife.or.ke

The next e-bulletin will come out in June 2007 and will be a 'special' edition about

Waterbird Monitoring in Africa

Please share your data, pictures and stories with the rest of the Africa Partnership (and beyond) and send them to:

antoINETTE.otieno@birdlife.or.ke

**** before 15 May 2007 ****

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