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THIS E-BULLETIN IS A 'SPECIES SPECIAL'

Message from the CAP chair

With the development of seven International and 15 National Species Action Plans for seven priority globally threatened species over the last few years, through a project funded by the Darwin Initiative, the stage has been set for long-term participatory efforts to save threatened bird species on the African continent. Adequate capacity has been built for effective species conservation work, and BirdLife Partner organizations involved in any of the action plans for threatened species are currently busy mobilizing resources to implement the objectives of the plans. Some Partners have already started with the implementation of their plans; others are yet to start practical work on threatened species conservation.

I wish you all the best of luck in the implementation of species conservation action, especially when it has become even more challenging to secure funds to implement some of the actions on the ground.

Dr Erasmus H. Owusu
CAP Chair, 2006



World Migratory Bird Day

9 April 2006 is first World Migratory Bird Day: *"Migratory Birds need our support now."*

The first World Migratory Bird Day will be launched on 9 April 2006 at the famous estate and wildlife reserve, Ol Ari Nyiro in Laikipia, Kenya. This estate is owned by the renowned writer and conservationist Mrs. Kuki Gallmann, the founder chairman of the Gallmann Memorial Foundation and Africa Conservancy. The event is organized by the Secretariats of CMS and AEWA and is meant to raise awareness about wild birds and the challenges they face during their migration. "If we want to safeguard birds for the future, it is time to act now," said Bert Lenten, the Executive Secretary of Bonn-based UNEP/ AEWA Secretariat.

It is envisaged that from this year onwards, World Migratory Bird Day will be celebrated worldwide on an annual basis, to be held on every second weekend of April.

BirdLife International obtained a grant from the Dutch Agricultural Counsellor in Nairobi to enable Partner organisations in Africa to organize activities at national and local level to celebrate World Migratory Bird Day 2006. We hope that many of you will contribute to making this day a success by participating in the event! Reports, articles and pictures of your activities will be posted on websites and published in various newsletters and e-bulletins. The BirdLife Secretariat will be distributing 500 posters across Africa.

For more information, please contact maaike.manten@birdlife.or.ke

Also visit <http://www.unep-aewa.org> or <http://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org>

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 and national level being organized within the network. Please send your contributions or comments to: george.eshiamwata@birdlife.or.ke.

Conservation work for 28 GTBs underway:

CEPF officially launches its project portfolio for the Eastern Arc as MoU is signed with Tanzania Government

On 23rd February, the Tanzanian Government through the Forestry and Beekeeping Division (FBD) of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF). Present to sign the MoU was Dr Jorgen Thomsen, CEPF Executive Director and Senior Vice President for Conservation Funding at Conservation International, and Dominic Kihwele, the Acting Director of FBD.



The BirdLife Africa Secretariat is included in the annex of the MoU as a major coordinator for information sharing.

During a colourful ceremony witnessed by over forty stakeholders, CEPF, BirdLife International, NatureKenya, the Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania, the International Centre for Insect Physiology and Ecology, Tanzania Forest Conservation Group, and the World Wildlife Fund for Nature East African Regional Programme Office also announced the launch of a portfolio of sixty-four conservation projects in the Eastern Arc Mountains and Coastal Forests. These projects will significantly improve the conservation of Kenya and Tanzania's rich natural sites, some of which are IBAs and are host to more than 28 globally threatened bird species.

For more information, contact george.eshiamwata@birdlife.or.ke or visit:

http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2006/02/eastern_arc.html

Africa's Species Working Group Coordinator:
What can you do to conserve bird species in Africa?

Perhaps you have heard or talked about conserving (threatened) species many times, but found it not easy to substantiate what quantifiable actions you could be taking to achieve this enormous task. Below is an initial (not exhaustive) list of what you (as an organisation or individual) could do nationally, in addition to conducting research and implementing specific conservation projects for species. For instance, you could:

- § Provide updates or supply information to the web-based Globally Threatened Bird Forum http://www.birdlife.org/action/science/species/global_species_programme/gtb_forums.html
This is your opportunity to have a say (of course based on facts) on the IUCN Red Listing of bird species
- § Review national protected species lists and make recommendations to the government
- § Get involved in development and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs)
- § Provide advice on species trade quotas and listings to national governments and Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) national technical committees
- § Get involved in implementing environmental education programmes for Globally Threatened Birds
- § Make efforts to have Threatened species conservation integrated into school and higher education curricula
- § Based on need, have in place or get involved in activities of Species Interest/Working Group/network(s)
- § Initiate or strengthen collaborative programmes with other organisations committed to saving species

By taking any of the above actions, you are making a step toward the conservation of species and also contributing to the BirdLife Africa Partnership Species Conservation Programme. If you have ever made an impact to bird species conservation in Africa, please share your experience with the rest. You may send a short article to this bulletin or send a message to me. I will then compile the experiences in the next issue of the bulletin. All ideas on species-specific initiatives that could be taken to save our African bird species are very welcome.

Paul K. Ndang'ang'a
paul.ndanganga@birdlife.or.ke

Avian Influenza: What can you do?

Originating in poultry, the high-pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) virus H5N1 has caused deaths among wild waterbirds at several locations in Asia and most recently in the Middle East and Europe. Now the virus has been confirmed in poultry within four African countries: Nigeria, Egypt, Niger and Cameroon. This has caused panic in most African countries and cases of dead birds are continually being reported throughout Africa. Here follows some advice on what you, especially as a member of the BirdLife NGO network or ornithological institution, could do to help. For instance, you could:

- § Proactively provide advice as required. The avian influenza section of the BirdLife website http://www.birdlife.org/action/science/species/avian_flu/ has updated information on the following: BirdLife Statement on Avian Influenza, Frequently Asked Questions, Advice to Birdwatchers, and Guidance for Public Authorities
- § Provide factual information regarding birds, and bird migration to counter prevailing misconceptions. Also give a balanced picture that will help reduce the negative publicity the migratory birds are facing due to being perceived wrongly to be the main vector of spreading H5N1
- § Offer help to the appropriate authorities on national surveillance and monitoring in wild birds if any initiatives are being set up or ongoing.
- § Establish a relationship with a good laboratory with required testing facilities before initiating surveillance and monitoring work
- § Put out a Press Release if you haven't already done so and update your websites
- § Lobby against any proposed inappropriate methods for dealing with the situation e.g. habitat destruction, culling of wild birds, etc
- § Join and actively participate in national avian flu taskforces or committees
- § During water bird counts or other bird research and monitoring activities look out for signs of unusual bird mortality or sickness. If such an incidence is observed, send the details immediately to the national veterinary authorities. Please do not attempt to collect specimens without appropriate personal protective equipment
- § Celebrate the forthcoming UNEP/AEWA World Bird Migratory day on 9 April 2006 (see separate article on page 1)
- § Lobby for the following recommendations for dealing with the spread of the H5N1 virus:
 - Heightened surveillance of migratory wild birds, with collection of as much ecological information as possible in the case of confirmed outbreaks
 - Improved biosecurity at all levels within the poultry industry
 - Tight controls, backed up by better enforcement, on the movements of poultry products, including fertilizer and feed made from poultry waste
 - A continued moratorium on trade in wild birds originating from affected regions
 - Full collaboration and sharing of information among those with relevant veterinary, medical, agricultural and environmental expertise.

Requests for information

Avian influenza – national initiatives

Please let us know of any ongoing national initiatives to monitor the AI situation or to take other steps regarding the outbreak, especially any initiatives you have been involved in or set up. We will use this information to build up a regional picture of what's going on and send this information back to you to help strengthen your information databank; and also to pan-African bodies so they have access to factual information regarding wild birds and what can be done. Please send your information to paul.ndanganga@birdlife.or.ke.

Wild bird trade and species populations

The African continent supports an amazing 2,313 of the world's 9,917 bird species, out of which almost 10% (234) are globally threatened. The illegal trade in wild birds may pose a significant threat to Africa's birds. The BirdLife Secretariat is working on a report about this issue, and requests for any information / documentation on wild bird trade in your country (or elsewhere) that you may have. Please send your input to george.eshiamwata@birdlife.or.ke. Please indicate the country, species involved and your contacts.

NEWS FROM THE NETWORK

Botswana

Key Wattled Crane area secured
Botswana's Okavango Delta is the major stronghold of the remaining population of the globally threatened Wattled Crane. However, large numbers of Wattled Cranes disperse out of the Okavango during summer, for instance to the eastern Makgadikgadi Pans.



(Photo: Pete Hancock, BirdLife Botswana)

Previous records indicated that up to 2,000 Wattled Cranes were using the grasslands to the east of Makgadikgadi Pans National Park. Although numbers are currently lower (the total Botswana population is estimated at 1,400 birds), this area is still favoured by Wattled Cranes. The area is communal grazing land with a high density of livestock, but is also used seasonally by zebra and wildebeest.

The Botswana Department of Animal Health, together with the Department of Wildlife, announced late last year that a veterinary fence would be constructed - to the east of the park boundary, thereby incorporating the key crane area effectively within the protected area! This new fence when constructed will have a positive impact on the Wattled Cranes population by securing a compatible form of land-use that will ensure the long-term survival of cranes. We therefore applaud the decision taken by the Botswana Department of Wildlife for choosing the most environmentally suitable alignment!

Please contact BirdLife Botswana for more information via pete@info.bw

Burundi

Species work important component of new strategic plan
Burundi's richness in terms of bird species is remarkable. A large part of the country is located within the Albertine Rift Endemic Bird Area and the country contains five IBAs. About 670 resident and migrant bird species are documented. Since its creation, ABO (the Association Burundaise pour la protection des Oiseaux, the BirdLife Affiliate in Burundi) aims to generate information that will be useful in protecting and conserving Burundian birds.

Since 2002, ABO has successfully raised funds for the conservation of some of the most critical bird habitats in Burundi, including Kibira and Rusizi National Parks respectively. These two sites are home to species of global concern such as the Madagascar Pond Heron, Kungwe Apalis, Grauer's Rush Warbler, Kivu Ground Thrush, Red-collared Mountain Babbler and Shelley's Crimsonwing. The funds secured to date have been used for site conservation through Site Support Groups (SSGs) development support, to survey Grauer's Rush Warbler in Kibira National Park and to conduct water bird counts at Rusizi National Park's delta and at Lake Rwhinda managed reserve. We at ABO greatly appreciate the financial support received to date from our supporters (WWF, NC-IUCN, TMF, RSPB, Wetlands International and others).



Photo: One of the pioneer ornithologists of ABO in the field

Species research is again a major component of the recently developed ABO 2006-2010 strategic plan. Information emanating from future species work will be useful for conservation planning, lobbying and updating the World Bird Database. Funds and skilled research personnel are currently some of the major constraints – but the sky will be the limit if we can overcome them!

Please contact Dieudonné Bizimana via bizdieu@yahoo.fr for more information.

Democratic Republic of Congo

The enigmatic Kabobo Apalis: Africa's best kept secret?

The Kabobo Apalis *Apalis kaboboensis* is a small warbler known only from Mt Kabobo, west of Lake Tanganyika, in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It is found in the canopy of montane forest where it has been recorded between 1,600 and 2,480 m. It is estimated that its suitable habitat covers no more than 2,000km². Little else is known about the species and hence it is considered as *Data Deficient* according to the 2004 IUCN Red List. The montane forest on Mt Kabobo is entirely unprotected and the only recent information available is gleaned from satellite images. But who knows how Mt Kabobo's biodiversity has been affected by the high human population in the area, poverty and recent civil unrest? The last known biodiversity surveys were conducted in the 1950s by Prozigone.

The BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat is keen to know more about this area and its special biodiversity. Please contact julius.arinaitwe@birdlife.or.ke if you have recent information about the site and paul.ndanganga@birdlife.or.ke if you know anything about the Kabobo Apalis.

Ghana

White-necked Picathartes rediscovered



White-necked Picathartes, *Picathartes gymnocephalus* is a globally threatened endemic bird of the Upper Guinea Forest (UGF). It has a global distribution restricted to Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote

d'Ivoire and Ghana. However, the primary habitat of White-necked Picathartes, lowland rainforest, is disappearing rapidly.

Distribution of the species is highly fragmented and all known populations are small, isolated and close to the minimum for long-term viability. The global population in the UGF is almost certainly less than 10,000 mature individuals (which is the threshold for *Vulnerable* status).

In Ghana there was no documented sighting of the bird for about 40 years until early 2003 when a single individual was sighted in

the Subim Forest Reserve by museum collectors from the USA. The sighting of this enigmatic bird rekindled the hope of the existence of the bird in the country. And indeed, a follow up visit by the field research team of the Ghana Wildlife Society to the Subim and the adjoining Ayum and Bonsam Bepo forest reserves did locate 13 active nests and two more individuals of the bird. The positive result of this follow-up visit propelled GWS to embark on an exercise to determine the status of the species in Ghana, funded by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF). This initiative is in line with the ultimate goal of the National Species Action Plan for the conservation of White-necked Picathartes under the Darwin Initiative-funded Species Action Planning for Threatened Species project of the BirdLife International Africa Partnership.

The survey discovered four major White-necked Picathartes nesting areas within the high forest zone of Ghana, and a good number of active nests were found at all the nesting sites - a pointer to the presence of a breeding population of the species.

During the implementation of the project, it became evident that local knowledge was crucial in finding nesting areas and nest sites.

For more details and lessons learned, please contact Augustus at: wildsoc@ighmail.com / aasamoah@mail.com.

Seychelles

Seychelles Scops-Owl hits the high note

In August 2005, the Central Bank



of Seychelles launched a new 500 Rupee note. In keeping with most Seychelles currency it features key wildlife species: the Seychelles Scops Owl or Syer on one side, and a sailfish on the other. A good 1.5 million Scops-Owl notes have been printed. This initiative will raise the profile of the species, which is listed as *Endangered* as a result of its extremely small population that is susceptible to stochastic events and the effects of introduced taxa.

See also www.natureseychelles.org.

BirdLife Africa Secretariat / ICIPE bird walks still going strong
The Friday morning birdwalks organised by the BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat in and around the ICIPE Campus (where the BirdLife office is located) continue to be a success, with the number of bird species sighted still increasing. The weekly walks provide us with information on trends in species diversity and abundance, periodical movements of birds and their activities at specific times of the year. Besides to our own monitoring system, the BirdLife/ICIPE birdwalks contribute information to the Birdfinder project (see previous e-bulletins or visit www.worldbirds.org/kenya).
The ICIPE campus is situated in the middle of a rapidly expanding residential area, which demonstrates the significance of 'safe havens' for birds in urban and human dominated areas. Fortunately, ICIPE is well aware of this fact and has dedicated part of the Campus grounds as a 'biodiversity park'.



Participants of the birdwalk, including the Director-General of ICIPE (in the background)

To date (March 2006), 168 species have been sighted during the 76 birdwalk sessions that have been held since its inception in May 2004. On average, 45 species have been sighted during each two-hour bird walk. The birdwalk has already attracted media coverage and has been attended by a wide variety of people from all-over the world.

Please contact the chair of the Africa Secretariat Birding Committee, george.eshiamwata@birdlife.or.ke for more information.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS OF NEW STAFF

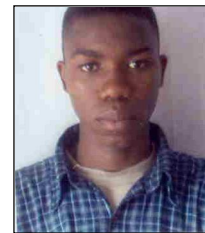


Philip Osano – Project Coordinator Swedbio
Philip has been recruited as the new Project Coordinator for the Swedbio-funded SSG/advocacy project on a seven months contract. He holds an M.Sc in Conservation Biology (University of Cape Town,

South Africa) and a B.Sc in Environmental Science (Egerton University, Kenya). He previously served as the East African Project Coordinator of the UNDP Equator Initiative Youth Exchange (EIYE) programme, and has gained extensive experience through various additional courses and internships. His interests range from environmental law, biodiversity policy and economic development. Please contact him at philip.osano@birdlife.or.ke

Samwel Dayo Osinubi - IBA Programme Intern

Samwel is the new intern at the BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat. The one-year internship programme is funded by the Jensen Foundation. Prior to the internship, Samwel worked as a staff



at the Technical Programmes Department of the Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF), on secondment from the A.P. Leventis Ornithological Research Institute (APLORI). He has experience and training in conservation project planning, implementation and documentation, having obtained a M.Sc. degree in Conservation Biology from the APLORI, awarded through the University of Jos, as well as a B.Sc. degree in Wildlife Management from the University of Ibadan. His work at the Secretariat will focus on the development of an IBA toolkit and the update of the regional IBA directory. You can contact him via samwel.osinube@birdlife.or.ke

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Conservation International, USA - Amphibian Specialist Group
Application deadline is 14 April
The Amphibian Specialist Group (ASG) is seeking an individual to fill the post of Executive Officer. The incumbent will provide leadership to the conservation, research and assessment divisions and a global network of amphibian experts to advance the implementation of the Amphibian Conservation Action Plan (ACAP). Qualifications: Masters Degree minimum, preferably PhD. Please see www.conservation.org or contact rdmoore@ci.conservation.org

TRAINING and FUNDING for TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Smithsonian Institution MAB Program's Professional Training
Application deadline is asap
The two courses on offer, to be held in Virginia, USA, are (1) the Biodiversity Assessment and Monitoring course, May 14 - June 3, 2006: this will cover monitoring techniques for vegetation, mammals and arthropods, as well as an introduction to project planning, GIS, and statistics; and (2) the Smithsonian Environmental Leadership course, September 17 - 29, 2006. This training will cover foundation skills for environmental leaders, determining mission and vision, negotiation and conflict resolution strategies, and impactful environmental communication. For more information contact Melissa Bellman at bellmanm@si.edu or visit www.si.edu/simab

Economic Tools for Conservation
Application deadline is 15 April
The Centre for Conservation Biology at Stanford University and Conservation International offer an International Training for Environmental Professionals. Training dates are Aug 14-25, 2006. For more details, visit: <http://www.conservation-strategy.org/training/international/2006/announcement.htm>

UNESCO: ANSTI

Application deadline is 31 May
African Network of Scientific & Technological Institutions (ANSTI) offers Postgraduate Fellowships 2006/2007. Contact: info@ansti.org / m.matemu@unesco.org or visit: <http://www.ansti.org>

New granting session now open at International Foundation for Science
Application deadline is 30 June
The International Foundation for Science (IFS) is inviting young scientists in developing countries to apply for research grants. Scientific topics acceptable must fall under the broad concept of sustainable management of biological or water resources. Visit <http://www.ifs.se> for guidelines and submit your proposal to applications@ifs.se.

The BP Conservation Programme...
... has three new elements

The Research Fellowship Program is a small grants program designed to support individual post graduate field research projects that have a clear application to the conservation of threatened wildlife and that are based on sound and innovative conservation science. Next deadline for applications to the RFP is in September. Visit: <http://www.wcs.org/international/rfp>

The Scholarships programme aims to develop advanced individual skills for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in high priority areas through providing training at postgraduate level. Only two scholarships are available each year and the process of putting forward and selecting awardees is through partner organisation nominations.

The Apprenticeships programme aims to transfer skills, to enthuse, offer experience to, and open career doors for apprentices in the four conservation partner organizations that form the BP Conservation Programme.

For more information, see <http://conservation.bp.com/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

1 Jan-31 Dec 2006: International Year of Desertification

Global event organized by UNCCD Secretariat.
Contact: secretariat@unccd.int

9 April: Launch of World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD)



In Ol Ari Nyiro in Laikipia, Kenya – and everywhere else. Organized by UNEP/CMS /AEWA (see also article on page 1).
Contact: aewa@unep.de

10-11 April: A scientific Seminar on Avian Influenza (AI)
UNEP Headquarters, Gigiri, Nairobi. Organized by UNEP/CMS/AEWA.
Contact: aewa@unep.de

24 - 26 April 2006: African Regional Expert Workshop on Sustainable Use
Organized by: Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Venue to be determined.
Contact: secretariat@biodiv.org

27 - 28 April 2006: Conserving Birds in Human-Dominated Landscapes: Weaving a Common Future
New York City, United States of America
Organized by: American Museum of Natural History.
Contact: brady@amnh.org

5 June 2006: World Environmental Day
Global event organized by UNEP.
Contact: elisabeth.guilbaud-coax@unep.org

19-23 June: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Council for the Africa Partnership Meeting (CAP) 2006.
Contact: hazell.thompson@birdlife.or.ke

The 2006 BirdLife International Council for the Africa Partnership meeting (CAP 2006) will be hosted by the Ethiopia Wildlife and Natural History Society (EWNHS) in Ethiopia from 19 – 23 June 2006.

As usual, this annual meeting of the BirdLife Africa Partnership will explore ways and means for funding, monitoring and facilitating implementation of the BirdLife Africa Programme, especially in 2006/7. The theme for this year's meeting is likely to be "Strengthening capacity for natural resource management in the BirdLife Africa network." This will include technical, financial and managerial capacity but there will be a strong focus on accessing sustainable funding. BirdLife Partners are currently discussing the theme and agenda.

20-24 June 2006: CI Global Symposium "Defying Africa's End: A Strategy for a Sustainable Future". Madagascar. Organized by Conservation International. Participation is by invitation only.
Contact: j.donovan@conservation.org

19-21 July 2006: Biodiversity in inhabited areas of Eastern Africa
Uganda. Organized by Makerere University Institute of Environment and Natural Resources.
Contact: nbdb@muenr.mak.ac.ug

July 1-Sept 1 2006: 22nd meeting of the CITES Animals Committee and the 16th Meeting of the CITES Plants Committee
Organized by CITES Secretariat.
Contact: cites@unep.ch

13-19 August: 24th International Ornithological Congress
Hamburg, Germany. See <http://www.i-o-c.org> for event programme and registration procedures.

October: everywhere
World Bird Festival – the global BirdLife event to celebrate birds!
Contact: edith.onyango@birdlife.or.ke for more information about the festival in 2006.

The next e-bulletin

Share your stories with the rest of the Partnership (and others)! Send them to:

george.eshiamwata@birdlife.or.ke

** before 26 May 2006 **