

October - December 2007

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Message from the CAP chair

Dear BirdLife Africa family members,

Two months ago, we met in Nairobi for the 10th anniversary of CAP where we had a chance to review the progress made in 2007 towards achieving the BirdLife Partnership objectives, as set out in the Africa Programme covering the period 2004-2008. Furthermore, we contributed ideas to develop a new Programme for the Partnership for the period 2009-2012.

The Partnership has achieved a lot not only by addressing national and regional conservation challenges but also confirmed itself as a major force advocating sustainable development that takes into account long-term benefits for people living around Important Bird Areas. As most of us now know, positive steps have been taken by our partners in saving both the Mabira Forest in Uganda and Lake Natron in Tanzania. Our collective voices at CAP in opposing harmful projects at the two IBAs was encouraging and need to be sustained till the projects are stopped completely.

I thank the Partnership for the honour bestowed upon me to chair the Council for the Africa Partnership in 2007/2008 and take this opportunity to wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and a very successful 2008.

Dr. Chipangura Chirara,

Chair of CAP (Council for the Africa Partnership) 2007/8

Think Pink - save Africa's flamingos

Three-quarters of the world's population of Lesser Flamingos live and breed in East Africa. Many depend on Tanzania's Lake Natron as a breeding site. Food is plentiful, nesting sites abound – and above all, the lake is isolated and undisturbed.



Survival of the Lesser flamingo is at stake.

But in recent months, the Tanzanian Government and the Indian company Tata Chemicals have put forward proposals to build a large-scale industrial plant to extract soda ash from Lake Natron's water, via a network of pipes across the surface of the lake. A new road and rail infrastructure would be built to serve the soda ash plant.

Since it takes very little disturbance to cause an entire breeding colony to abandon its nests, BirdLife International believes the development and associated infrastructure will displace and scatter the 500,000 pairs of Lesser Flamingos which nest at Lake Natron. 'Think Pink - save Africa's flamingos' is BirdLife's campaign to stop the proposed development at Lake Natron.

You can get involved by visiting www.birdlife.org/action/campaigns/lake_natron_flamingos/index.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.

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REGIONAL INITIATIVES

BirdLife at COP 5 of the Nairobi Convention

The Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Eastern Africa Region, also known as the Nairobi Convention, was signed in 1985 and came into force in 1996. The Nairobi Convention area extends from Somalia in the north to the Republic of South Africa, covering 10 States, namely Comoros, France (La Reunion), Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia, Tanzania and the Republic of South Africa.



Potential Marine IBAs in Africa

The fifth Conference of the Parties for this convention was held from 5-8 November 2007 in South Africa under the auspices of NEPAD and attended by among others, Jane Gaithuma of BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat.

The conference focused on the progress and successes achieved by governments, key partners and stakeholders towards the implementation of the convention's work programme and the NEPAD Action Plan for the Environment.

During this meeting, BirdLife was recognized as a partner in the implementation of the Nairobi work Programme under two themes. The first role is the assessment of key coastal ecosystems and resources, and secondly the management of key coastal ecosystems and resources, especially biodiversity and key species. BirdLife's Marine IBAs will be a key component of this work.

For more information, please contact:
Jane.Gaithuma@birdlife.or.ke

Training for biodiversity monitoring in Africa

A training of trainers workshop in biodiversity Monitoring was held from 22-24 November 2007 at the Kenya Wildlife Service Training Institute in Naivasha. A total of 22 participants, drawn from BirdLife Partners in Africa, Wetlands International and the BirdLife International Secretariat offices in Nairobi and Cambridge attended.



Workshop participants engage in monitoring at Kinangop grasslands IBA in Kenya

This workshop was held under the auspices of a regional initiative funded by the European Commission and managed by RSPB (BirdLife in UK) on 'Instituting Effective Monitoring of Protected Areas/Important Bird Areas to reduce biodiversity loss in Africa'.

The project seeks to meet the CBD 2010 target of reducing biodiversity loss by monitoring the status and trends of biodiversity in Protected Areas/Important Bird Areas. The objective of this workshop was to develop capacity amongst the practitioners to develop and implement national biodiversity monitoring systems using effective but cheap and robust methods.

Participants reviewed biodiversity monitoring experiences so far and shared lessons learned, particularly from the pilot IBA monitoring project in Kenya and the mandated government institutions such as the Uganda Wildlife Authority and the Kenya Wildlife Service.

The results from this workshop will be packaged into an IBA monitoring toolkit for instituting sustainable biodiversity monitoring systems across Africa.

For more information, contact
Thandiwe.Chikomo@birdlife.or.ke.

NEWS

New addition to the BirdLife family in Africa

The BirdLife Partnership in Africa has another reason to celebrate in 2007 with the addition of a new member of the family! The Wildlife and Environment Society of Malawi has been officially admitted to the BirdLife Partnership, becoming the 20th member and only the third organization to be admitted during the period 2004-2008. Just as the birth of a child to a family is a long-protracted process, joining the BirdLife Partnership takes months of relationship-building and is worthy of celebration.



WESM is the mouthpiece for conservation in Malawi

"I am delighted to inform you that the application of the Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi (WESM) to become the BirdLife International Affiliate for Malawi has been accepted. The decision was taken by the BirdLife Global Council at its last meeting held in Nairobi in October 2007", said Dr Hazell Shokellu Thompson, the head of BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat while breaking the news to the Partnership.

The BirdLife Africa Partnership now comprises 11 full Partners, three Partners Designate and six Affiliates.

For more information about the BirdLife Partnership in Africa, please contact: birdlife@birdlife.or.ke

For more information on WESM, please contact: Wesm-hq@africa-online.net

CONSERVATION AND LIVELIHOODS

Conservation and livelihoods through Avitourism

"BirdLife South Africa is promoting avitourism in South Africa as a means to enhance the conservation of birds, while at the same time contributing to the socio-economic development of local communities". Said Duncan Pritchard of BirdLife South Africa during the 10th CAP meeting in Nairobi.

Simply put, BirdLife South Africa's strategy encompasses three main elements. a) Guide Training to ensure that people, especially from rural communities acquire the requisite skills to handle visitors and provide satisfactory service. b) Birding Routes development and marketing to ensure adequately diversified and interesting itineraries. c) Operating the BirdLife Travel tours business.



Local bird guides, trained by BirdLife South Africa

Impacts realized on the conservation front stem from increased awareness of birds and Important Bird Areas by local communities and school children, who form conservation groups and undertake conservation activities such as fire control, monitoring, etc. Impacts on livelihoods include increased opportunities for income-generation by local communities, direct incomes to the guides and increased employment opportunities within the rural areas.

Some lessons have been learnt in the process, including the need to run avitourism as a business as opposed to birdwatching which is a hobby.

More on this can be obtained from Duncan Pritchard avitourism@birdlife.org.za.

Sustaining biodiversity to sustain livelihoods in rural Botswana

BirdLife Botswana is one of the three countries implementing the Swedbio-funded "Improving Livelihoods" project aiming to develop linkages between conservation and livelihoods of local people. Three sites have been selected at which a range of activities have been implemented with the key achievements being:

- a) Formal and legal registration of a community Trust at Lake Ngami (Bosele Lake Ngami Trust) as a Site Support Group to champion conservation and income generation activities.
- b) Training of 15 community members in basic bird guiding (at Nata Sanctuary) and production of brochures and other publicity materials to market the sites as avitourism sites.



Competent birdwatchers will drive avitourism in Botswana

It is early days for BirdLife Botswana to tell the conservation and livelihood benefits of these activities, but the organization has its sights set firmly on avitourism as one option for linking conservation and livelihoods.

For more information, please contact Kabelo Senyatso blb@birdlifebotswana.org.bw.

Enhancing rights and livelihoods in the Ngovayang Forest, Cameroon.

A project was launched four years ago by the Cameroon Biodiversity Conservation Society aiming to improve the livelihood of indigenous people (Bagyeli) living inside the Ngovayang Forest through sustainable natural resource management. Since then, many activities with direct impact on local community livelihood have been carried out, including:

- Establishment and promotion of the sustainable exploitation and commercialisation of Gnetum, a leafy and protein rich vegetable found in secondary forest.
- The construction of 36 housing blocks accommodating over 100 families of Bagyeli and thus directly improving their living conditions.



Bagyeli family now settled outside the forest

- Training to introduce agriculture among the Bagyeli and distribution of Agricultural inputs. As a result about 10 children from the project area have been able to attend school in 2007.

- Supporting the Bagyeli in the processing of civil status documentation; identity cards, birth certificates, election cards, etc to allow them to access social benefits.

As the Bagyeli communities recognize their rights and acquire their own means of income generation, they are less likely to be exploited by surrounding communities, to engage in hunting, timber harvesting and other destructive activities.

For more information, contact Guillaume Dzikouk (cbcs@iccnet.cm).

SPECIAL REVIEW

Success and Challenges in Conserving Africa's Birds

Success and challenges in conserving Africa's birds were reviewed at the 10th annual meeting of BirdLife International's Council for the African Partnership (CAP). The meeting brought together 24 nationalities from the BirdLife Africa network from 15 to 19 October in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi. The meeting aimed to share experiences, plan strategy and design conservation plans for the period until 2012. The bleak picture of the possible exploitation of **Tanzania's Lake Natron** by Tata Chemicals overshadowed much of the successful campaigns but the entire BirdLife Africa network agreed and signed a petition to the effect that Africa will stand firmly behind the Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania (BirdLife in Tanzania) to ensure that mining of soda ash from Lake Natron never gets off the ground as it will mean the end of East Africa's lesser flamingo population.



Participants at 10th CAP meeting

BirdLife International's four focal areas namely species, sites, habitats and people formed the basis of deliberations at the meeting. Many of Africa's 2300 plus bird species face serious threats due to habitat degradation, poisoning, trade, unsustainable hunting, deforestation, disease and climate change such that more than 10% are globally threatened. To scale up conservation of these species, a **Species Guardian Programme** has been established in which individuals or institutions are signed up as guardians of Critically Endangered Species. Funding for three such species: the Djibouti francolin, the Long-billed Tailorbird and the Dwarf Olive Ibis has been obtained

from the British Birding Fair to monitor and conserve these birds. The meeting noted the remarkable conservation achievement of BirdLife Seychelles in the successful downgrading to Near-threatened of the Seychelles Fody in Seychelles. Range extensions for the Uluguru Bush-shrike in Tanzania, and Ibadan Malimbe in Nigeria and Cameroon; discovery of the Grauer's Scrub Warbler nest in Rwanda and discovery of the wintering grounds of the Northern Bald Ibis in Ethiopia were also highlighted.



Northern Bald Ibis: - recently discovered wintering in Ethiopia

The Africa network approved establishment of a **Common Bird Monitoring Programme** throughout the African continent that will serve as an early warning system of degradation of the environment. Implementation will start in early 2008 building on the more than 80 ongoing monitoring activities of African BirdLife partners.

Trade in wild caught birds was discussed as one of the key issues that warranted a position statement from the African partnership. During a previous meeting in 2006, BirdLife Africa members adopted a position of opposing any trade in wild caught birds. This call had a reverberating effect and prompted the CITES secretariat to offer the African partnership support in scientific studies to collect data in species that feature in trade, training and capacity building in African countries as well as support in better law enforcement and trade monitoring. As a result, CAP has decided to work with CITES on improved trade regulation than to continue its call for a total ban on wild caught birds.

The **Important Bird Areas (IBA) Programme** is a flagship initiative of BirdLife International that works towards safeguarding IBAs against human impacts, thereby ensuring the survival of large numbers of bird species and their populations in suitable habitats. Africa has over 1,200 IBAs across the

continent and through the members of the BirdLife Africa network and other conservation organizations some IBAs are receiving monitoring and conservation attention. The meeting noted that 79 IBA sites are being monitored by the BirdLife Partnership across the continent with one National IBA Status report for 2006 published and a regional IBA status monitoring report was also published with data from 12 countries. Conservation projects are being implemented at more than 40 IBA sites, 25 IBAs had their legal protection status enhanced and private land was purchased for a bird sanctuary at one IBA in Kenya. However, IBAs are by no means secure. Emerging threats to several IBAs were noted e.g. Lake Natron in Tanzania, Tana River Delta in Kenya and Babile Sanctuary in Ethiopia. One great success noted was the effort of Nature Uganda in stopping the deforestation of a significant section of the Mabira forest for sugar cane production. This was a prime example of how a BirdLife Africa Partner could halt the demise of an IBA by successful campaigning and lobbying against unsound developments in IBAs. This victory of Nature Uganda not only resulted in securing the forest for 30% of Uganda's bird species but also ensured that communities that live around the forest do not lose the economic sustainability that is supported by the forest.



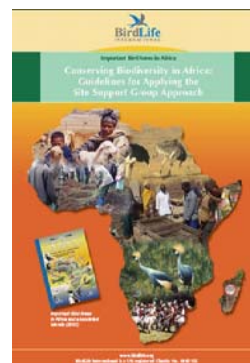
Protesting against destruction of Mabira forest

BirdLife Africa network members recognized that **pesticide poisoning** of birds is becoming a critical threat to birds across the region and tabled serious efforts to prevent the killer drug Diclofenac from entering Africa as a livestock pain-killer. This drug has all but wiped out the Oriental White-backed vulture on the Indian sub-continent and CAP members pledged to do everything possible to prevent the roll out of this drug in Africa.

Africa is a global leader within BirdLife International in developing the concept of **Site**

Support Groups or SSGs. These groups are local communities that are engaged in the hands-on management of IBAs and thus become the de-facto guardians of such sites. The report notes that Africa has developed a Site Support Group Manual that has become the bench mark for this activity in other parts of the world. Site Support Groups are often the victims of developments, mining, deforestation and agriculture that remove the natural resources that offer sustainable livelihoods to such communities while also seriously compromising the habitats of African bird species. This manual will assist BirdLife partners across the globe to develop site support groups while ensuring their own sustainability and that of precious bird habitats.

Site Support Group manual



The BirdLife Africa network called upon all its member organizations to increase their **membership** by 25% by the year 2012. This is based on the need for larger stakeholder involvement and support as well as the funding that may be accrued from larger membership numbers. On the other hand, it was recognised that the African Partnership should network with social and development-oriented NGOs to increase its service to the people's aspect of bird conservation.

The 2007 CAP meeting was also the first to host a regional **African Bird Fair** in which members displayed their programmes and merchandise. This was a great success and is envisaged to be a growing event at future CAP meetings.

The first Alice Bhukoli Award was presented to Nature Seychelles in recognition of significant contributions to bird conservation through working with people and women in particular.

For further information please contact:
hazell.thompson@birdlife.org.ke

RESOURCES FOR CONSERVATION

The Raptor Research Foundation's Leslie Brown Memorial Grant 2008

Are you involved or planning to work on African birds of prey? Then you may want to look at the funding opportunity below.

In memory of one of the most inspired and productive raptor conservation biologists of recent decades, the Raptor Research Foundation, Inc. announces the availability of the Leslie Brown Memorial Grant, for up to \$1,400, to provide financial assistance for research and/or dissemination of information on African birds of prey.

Applicants must send five copies of a résumé, specific study objectives, an account of how funds will be spent, and an indication of how the proposed work would relate to other work by the applicant (if applicable) and other sources of funding.

A complete application must be sent by February 15 to: Dr. Jeff Lincer, Director of Research, Wildlife Research Institute, Inc. 9251 Golondrina Drive, California 91941 USA, jlincer@tns.net

Young Women Conservation Biologists Award

Do you know an African woman who is effectively translating biological training into action to protect biodiversity? Then nominate her for the Society for Conservation Biology's Young Women Conservation Biologists Award and express your recognition of her efforts.

The nominee should have demonstrated:

1. Evidence of leadership, creativity, self-motivation and enthusiasm.
2. Evidence of service (educational, managerial, research etc.) to conservation.
3. Ability to work with others across gender, social class and ethnicity.

More details and nomination forms can be obtained from www.conbio.org/sections/africa/ywcb
Deadline for receiving nominations is 31 January 2008

UPCOMING EVENTS

2 February 2008: World Wetlands Day.
Theme: "Healthy Wetlands, Healthy People".
Further information available from www.ramsar.org

CBD meetings below: Contact: Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Contact: secretariat@cbd.int, www.cbd.int

a) **26 - 28 March 2008**, (tbc). Joint Article 8(j) and Clearing-House Mechanism Capacity-Building Workshop on Networking and Information Exchange (**Africa region**)

d) **19 - 30 May 2008, Bonn, Germany**: Ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP-9)

7-12 September 2008: South Africa. 12th Pan-African Ornithological Congress.
Contact: Doug.Harebottle@uct.ac.za. Also visit: <http://paoc12.adu.org.za/sciprogram.htm>

22 – 27 September, 2008: Buenos Aires, Argentina
BirdLife International World Conference,
Contact: birdlife@birdlife.org

5-14 October 2008: Barcelona, Spain
IUCN World Conservation Congress,
Registration and further information from www.iucn.org/congress

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

**antoinette.otieno@birdlife.or.ke
** before 31 January 2008 ****