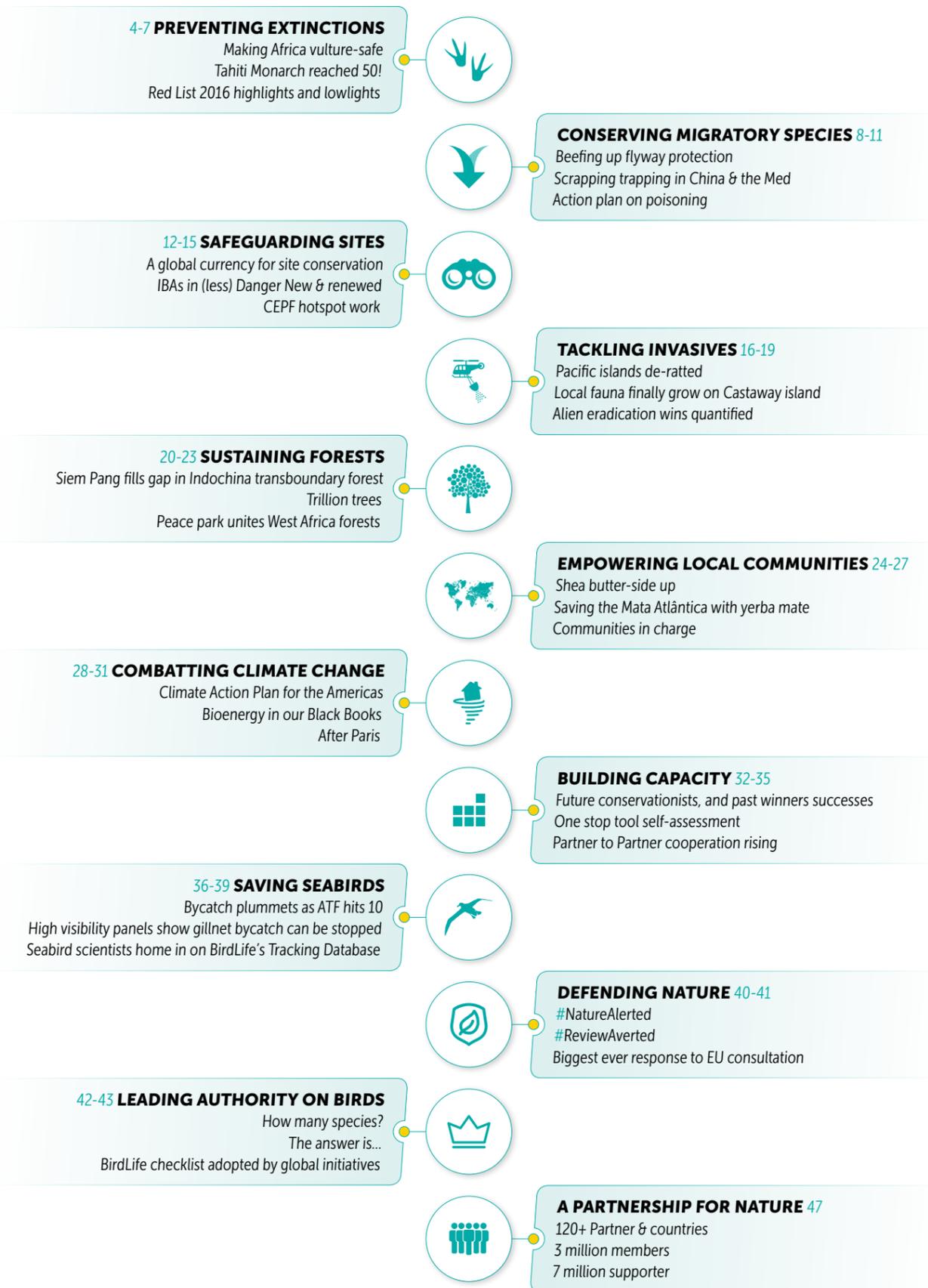


ANNUAL REVIEW

2016



HIGHLIGHTS 2016



Since June 1922, BirdLife International has been committed to working for birds on an international level. Over the nine and a half decades since what was then called the International Council for Bird Preservation was founded, our work has expanded to include benefits to nature and people.

Now in my fourth year as BirdLife's Chairman, I am proud to present some highlights of the wide-ranging conservation impact we delivered across the globe in 2016.

Our Vulture Campaign was endorsed by government ministers across West Africa, while engaging communities and conservation agencies in other African countries. Our work to restore islands in the Pacific from the ravages of invasive species continued, including our most ambitious project yet. In Europe, we mobilised the biggest public defence of the EU Nature Directives, which are the foundation of the world's most extensive protected area system. In these, as in all our achievements, the three strands which contribute to BirdLife's unique approach—partnership, science and action—can be traced.

Late in 2015, in Paris, a historic agreement on climate deal was approved in 195 countries. The BirdLife Partnership was there, as ever, pushing the agenda for birds and biodiversity. In the weeks before the Paris conference, we published *The Messengers*, a report which synthesised hundreds of studies of birds and showed that changes in distribution and the timings of annual events are warning us about threats from climate change. In 2016, we launched a *Climate Action Plan for the Americas*, which provides a roadmap to a sustainable and climate-resilient future for ecosystems, and the people who depend upon them, across Latin America and the Caribbean. The action plan is guiding the work of Partners at the national level, and also uniting the efforts of the full BirdLife Americas Partnership to build a comprehensive network of climate-resilient sites across the region.

2016 was another year of achievement for the BirdLife Partnership, but there is still much to do. The BirdLife Partnership must continue to grow, in its geographical reach, its membership and its impact.

The BirdLife Partnership Strategy is underpinned by four strategic pillars: saving species, conserving sites and habitats, encouraging ecological sustainability, and empowering people for positive change. These are fulfilled across the nine global programmes which form the structure for this Annual Report.

The essence of the BirdLife Partnership is that everyone can contribute, wherever they are in the world, whether staff, members, or volunteers, and that the impact of every contribution is greater because we are a **Partnership**.

By the end of 2016, my first full year as BirdLife's CEO, I saw the full potential of the BirdLife Partnership as a world leader in conservation: the millions of supporters ready to be mobilised, the depth of civil society engagement, the power of collaboration, and the solid science all our conservation work is founded on. BirdLife really is the 'Power of Many'. It has been the best kept secret in conservation. It is my personal mission to change this.

Someone once described BirdLife to me as 'a little United Nations', and it is a great description. BirdLife Partner organisations are found in 118 countries and territories around the world, working hand-in-hand with their countries' governments and people. BirdLife is founded on the belief that a strong civil society movement for nature will bring lasting conservation impact locally, regionally and globally.

2016 was an extraordinary year for BirdLife. In the Americas, ten years of work in the Southern cone grasslands is resulting in over half a million hectares of improved habitats for migratory birds.

The long road to making Africa vulture-safe began through national Partners in key countries like Zambia, Botswana, Kenya and Tanzania, and also regionally with the East African Community and the African Union. I was delighted by the creation of a transboundary Peace Park protecting forest shared between Liberia and Sierra Leone after years of hard work by BirdLife Partners.

In Asia, we saw a new protected area fill a critical gap in a huge area of protected forest that crosses Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

In Europe and Central Asia, we defended nature with the biggest ever response to an EU consultation in 2015 which resulted in a decision by the European Commission in December 2016 to maintain the Birds and Habitats Directives, and ensure that they are better implemented.

In the Pacific, Tahiti Monarch reached 50 individuals, which is the highest since our Partner began controlling rats. BirdLife and Island Conservation carried out one of the most ambitious IAS eradication programmes, tackling six islands in the Acteon and Gambier groups.

Across the world's Southern Ocean our Albatross Task Force worked to end the needless deaths of thousands of albatrosses caught on fishing lines and in nets.

The BirdLife Partnership could not have achieved any of this without the trust and continued support of our donors, collaborators and global volunteers. We are indebted to their belief in the BirdLife Partnership as a force for birds, nature and **people**.

Khaled Anis Irani
BirdLife International, Chairman



Patricia Zurita
BirdLife International, CEO





© Marietjie Froneman

LEARNING TO LOVE THE CLEAN-UP CREW

Like Asia's twenty years ago, Africa's vultures are on a steep path to extinction. The BirdLife Africa Partnership is scaling up efforts to combat poisoning and raise awareness of the irreplaceable services these historically unappreciated birds provide

Africa's vultures have become collateral damage in the continent-wide practice of poisoning big predators by livestock herders. They are also deliberately poisoned by elephant poachers, to stop them drawing attention to their activities: up to 500 have died in a single incident. Electrocutation and collisions with energy infrastructures are another big emerging problem. All this is compounding wider issues such as habitat loss and food shortage.

Before 2016, actions were being undertaken to conserve vultures, but most were small scale initiatives confined to a few countries. Various BirdLife Partners across Africa were engaged in advocacy to combat poisoning, as well as campaigns to raise awareness of the vital services vultures provide. But it was evident that a massive scaling up of effort was required if vultures were not to disappear from African skies, inside as well as outside protected areas.

Late in 2015, BirdLife's African Partners came together to agree coordinated action. In March 2016, they launched *Saving Africa's Vultures*, a decade-long strategy to return vultures to their former numbers.

Three pilot schemes in Botswana, Kenya and Zimbabwe are tackling poisoning. They aim to establish how and why poisoning is taking place, to guide stricter regulation of toxic compounds, ensure an effective and rapid response to poisoning incidents, and change attitudes to vultures by warning of the environmental catastrophe their disappearance would bring about. National BirdLife Partners are working with government and local community groups, as well as with other conservation NGOs. By the end of the three-year programme, far fewer vultures will be meeting premature deaths from poisoning.

Wildlife rangers are usually the first to notice poisoning incidents. A training course developed as part of a formal poisoning response protocol, in collaboration with the Kenya Wildlife Service, shows what actions to take to minimise the impact of an incident and make the scene safe, and what data to gather to investigate it and prevent future poisonings. Partners give similar courses in Zimbabwe and Botswana.



CHANGING THE COMMONLY HELD NEGATIVE PERCEPTION OF VULTURES WILL HELP GARNER THE SUPPORT WE OWE THEM. SINCE I WAS APPOINTED IN NOVEMBER 2015, I'VE BEEN AMAZED HOW QUICKLY EVERYONE RALLIES AROUND THE CAUSE, ALL FOR THE LOVE OF VULTURES

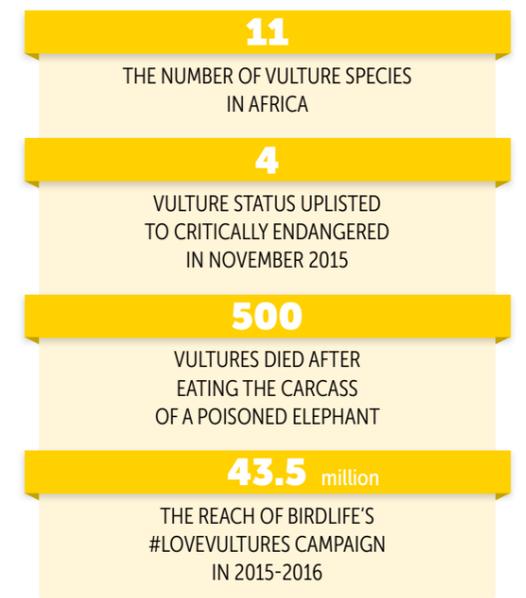
Masumi Gudka
Vulture Conservation Manager

The rapid decline of a continent's vultures has profound consequences for its people. Vultures help reduce the spread of diseases by cleaning up rotting carcasses. These ecosystem services would be enormously costly to replace. In India, the collapse of vulture populations has led to a huge increase in disease, particularly rabies which it is estimated to be costing government USD 1.5 billion per year, not to speak of the appalling human costs.

In Asia, vulture numbers are stabilising, thanks to BirdLife's lobbying of governments to ban the use of certain toxic veterinary medicines. One successful measure has been the introduction of Vulture Safe Zones, where only toxin-free carcasses are exposed. BirdLife is introducing an adaptation of Vulture Safe Zones to Africa, beginning in Zambia.

During the course of 2016, BirdLife organised vulture conservation events at the African Ministerial Conference for the Environment (AMCEN), United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA2), IUCN World Conservation Congress and CITES Conference of Parties. Through the African Union, BirdLife was a key contributor of inputs on vulture conservation in the Action Plan for the African Strategy to Combat Illegal Trade in Wild Flora and Fauna, approved by all African governments.

Across Africa and Eurasia, we are working with the IUCN Vulture Specialist Group and Vulture Conservation Foundation to develop a Multi-species Action Plan under the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS), to define clear conservation and management actions for all the vultures of this vast region.





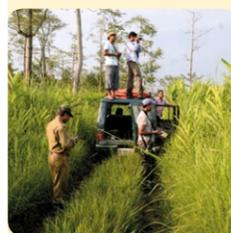
SAVING SPECIES

New-found populations and international collaborations

BirdLife's Preventing Extinctions Programme (PEP) projects led to conservation progress for some of the world's most threatened birds: those listed as Critically Endangered by BirdLife and IUCN.

In Asia, we identified new populations of the Bengal Florican *Houbaropsis bengalensis* and other threatened riverine and grassland birds, and of Forest Owlets *Heteroglaux blewitti*. New observations, involving a pioneering Chinese-Indonesian collaboration, were made of Chinese Crested Terns *Thalasseus bernsteini* wintering in Indonesia and now breeding in the Yellow Sea. We discovered more about Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Calidris pygmaea* migration routes, linked to advocacy for conservation of sites along the flyway. Tracking and associated fieldwork also pointed to new stopover and wintering sites for Sociable Lapwings *Vanellus gregarius* in Central and South Asia.

In Africa, forest restoration trials for Taita Apalis *Apalis fuscicularis* continued, and a 25 year land lease was initiated, with a land purchase to be added in 2017. For Long-billed



Forest Warbler *Artisornis moreaui* (formerly Long-billed Tailorbird), four years of habitat restoration has led to 50% colonisation of the experimental edge plots we regenerated by working with farmers. The Northern Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita* population in Morocco reached 600 birds, the highest population since detailed monitoring began 25 years ago.

In Argentina, where National Park management and invasive species control through PEP support has benefited the Hooded Grebe *Podiceps gallardoi* on its breeding grounds, a new threat has emerged in the form of planned hydroelectric dams on the river that feeds the estuary where the birds winter. BirdLife immediately launched a strong advocacy programme to counter this.

In the Pacific, the Tahiti Monarch *Pomarea nigra* population exceeded 50 birds for the first time in 20 years, thanks to conservation management. Biosecurity measures continue to keep the island of Rimatara free of rats as a potential home for an insurance population of this species.



RED LIST 2016

Caged bird trade is pushing once common birds towards extinction

BirdLife is the designated authority for birds for *The IUCN Red List*, the world's most comprehensive information source on the global conservation status of plant and animal species. The 2016 Red List update was completed on schedule in December, simultaneously with the completion of a comprehensive taxonomic review compiled by BirdLife International in collaboration with the *Handbook of the Birds of the World* (see page 42). The overall number of bird species assessed has reached 11,121.

Of 742 newly-recognised bird species assessed, 11% were found to be threatened. For example, the recently described Antioquia Wren *Thryophilus sernai* has been listed as Endangered, as more than half of its habitat could be wiped out by a single planned dam construction. Thirteen of the new species entered the Red List as Extinct.

Red List assessments revealed that some familiar species may soon disappear from wild places because of illegal trapping for the caged bird trade.



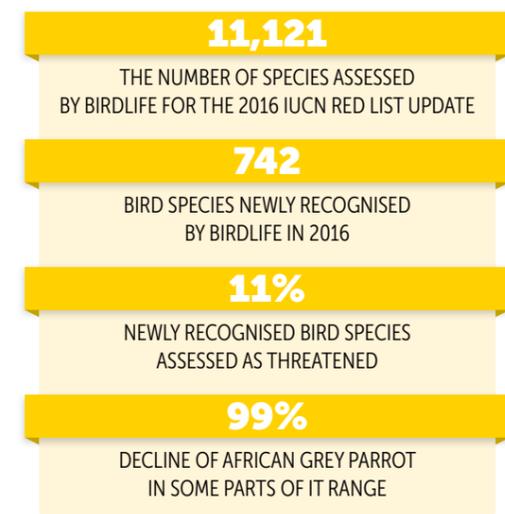
AS OUR KNOWLEDGE DEEPENS, IT IS CLEAR THAT UNSUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE, LOGGING, INVASIVE SPECIES, AND OTHER THREATS, SUCH AS ILLEGAL TRADE, ARE STILL DRIVING MANY SPECIES TOWARDS EXTINCTION

Dr Ian Burfield
Global Science Coordinator

In parts of Central Africa, African Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus* numbers have declined by as much as 99%, and its threat status has been raised to Endangered. In Asia, species popular as caged birds are being driven close to extinction by the trade.

The news was better for some species confined to small islands. The Seychelles White-eye *Zosterops modestus*, downlisted from Critically Endangered to Endangered in 2005, has further improved its status to Vulnerable. The St Helena Plover *Charadrius sanctaehelenae* has doubled in numbers following habitat restoration and control of invasive predators, and made the long step from Critically Endangered to Vulnerable.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves (SPEA, BirdLife in Portugal) has implemented a series of EU-funded projects to save the Azores Bullfinch *Pyrrhula murina*, endemic to the island of São Miguel. Habitat restoration, through systematic removal of alien plant species and their replacement with native fruits and seeds on which the bird depends at different times of the year, saw the bullfinch's status improve from Critically Endangered to Endangered in 2010. In 2016, with survival rates improving and the population stabilising, it further improved to Vulnerable. SPEA's current and most ambitious project is to connect the patches of restored habitat into one large area, and to establish a *cordon sanitaire* around it, to prevent the re-entry of invasive plants.





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WINS ACROSS THE AMERICAS FOR BIRDS (AND BEEF)

In southern South America, conservationists and ranchers have united to save the nature and culture of the Pampas. They call themselves la Alianza de Pastizal del Conosur, the Southern Cone Grasslands Alliance

In its tenth year, BirdLife International's Southern Cone Grasslands Alliance was awarded the US Forest Service's 2016 Wings Across the Americas Conservation Award, under the International Cooperation category. The award recognises the outstanding work of BirdLife Partners in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay in conserving natural grasslands and migratory birds in the Pampas.

The Pampas supports more than 400 bird species, including endemics such as Greater Rhea *Rhea Americana* and Pampas Meadowlark *Leistes defilippii*, and migrants that breed in

North America, wintering in the Southern Cone. The Grasslands Alliance measures the success of its work by monitoring five migrants: Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Tryngites subruficollis*, Upland Sandpiper *Bartramia longicauda*, American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*, Bobolink *Dolichonyx oryzivorus* and Swainson's Hawk *Buteo swainsoni*.

More than half South America's temperate grasslands have been lost to industrial agriculture, and little of the natural Pampas remains. Landowners are under pressure to maximise their holdings with commodity crops such as soybeans, or industrial forestry.

The gaucho—the tough, independent pampas cowboy who gives the region its cultural identity—has been slipping into legend.

In 2006, four BirdLife Partners, Aves Argentinas, Aves Uruguay, SAVE Brasil and Guyra Paraguay, formed the Southern Cone Grasslands Alliance (la Alianza de Pastizal del Conosur). With 95% of the grasslands in private hands, the Partners knew it would be impossible to reverse the losses by establishing conventional protected areas. Instead they provided incentives to ranchers to maintain traditional extensive grazing, which had coexisted with the region's rich biodiversity for centuries, and to keep or restore 50% of their grassland to its natural state.

The world's growing demand for beef is being met from feedlots, vast compounds where cattle are fattened for slaughter on a diet of grain and soy—mostly grown on former grasslands. Concerns over the animal welfare and health implications of this kind of beef are fuelling demand for a more natural product.

A cornerstone of the Alliance's approach has been the "bird friendly" beef certification scheme. Saffron-cowled Blackbird *Xanthopsar flavus*, a threatened grassland endemic found only in the four Alliance countries, is its logo.



BIRDLIFE'S ALLIANCE HAS GONE BEYOND BIRDS AND BORDERS TO HELP PEOPLE ACROSS FOUR COUNTRIES

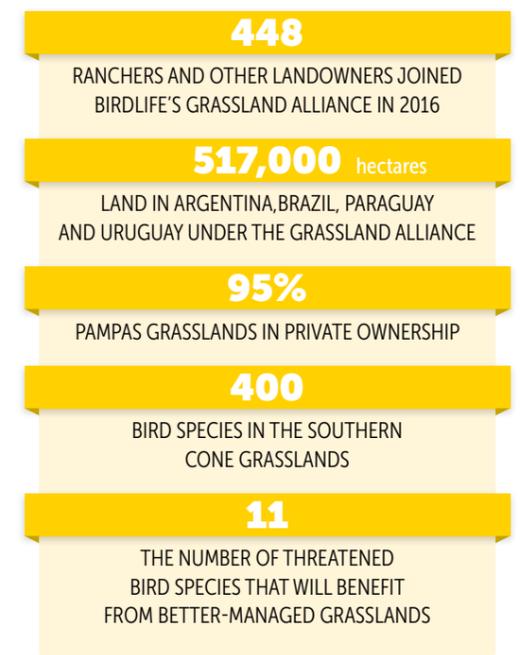
Nicolas Marchand
Co-ordinator, Southern Cone Grasslands Alliance

To ranchers, the benefits are irresistible. They produce up to three times more meat per hectare than other natural grazing systems, an improvement which is sustainable into the future without expensive inputs. They and their communities benefit from clean water and increased resilience to climate change. Most importantly, there are growing regional and global markets, prepared to pay a premium for certified beef. By the end of 2016, there were 448 Alliance farms covering 517,000 ha, and 312 farms (363,900 ha) were Alliance-certified for beef production.

Argentina was the first country to sell certified beef in its domestic market and, to export to Europe. Next, SAVE Brasil signed a deal with a major beef distributor to supply supermarkets.

Best practice has been formalised in the Grassland Conservation Index (GCI), developed in collaboration with six national, state and provincial governments. The GCI grades each ranch's contribution to conservation of natural grasslands, and measures the grass's beef-producing capacity.

The Grasslands Alliance's connects the work of BirdLife Partners in countries along migration routes. BirdLife is developing best management techniques in other key grassland areas, including the Paraguayan Pantanal, Colombian Llanos, Northeast Mexican Arid Grasslands and Bolivia's Beni Savanna, all areas used by priority migrants. Practices developed in the Southern Cone are spreading to the North American **Partners**.





NET LOSS IS SPOONIE'S GAIN

Working with local birdwatchers and government, BirdLife's Hong Kong Partner has made Fudong Estuary safe for migrating shorebirds

BirdLife's China Programme continued in 2016 to address illegal killing of birds in southern China. Our outstanding success involved a coastal wetland of importance for migratory shorebirds, especially the Critically Endangered Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Calidris pygmaea*.

In December 2012, a team from the Hong Kong Bird Watching Society (HKBWS, BirdLife Partner) found four Spoon-billed Sandpipers on the coast at the Fucheng Estuary, in south-west Guangdong Province. They also found evidence of shorebird trapping on a large scale, involving hundreds of mistnets 3 metres high, with an estimated linear coverage of 11.5 km.

The nets were set beside shorebird roosts on fishponds, salt pans and sandbars on the coast, as well as in nearby paddyfields and marshes. During the team's visit, they saw hundreds of dead shorebirds caught in them. There was no doubt that Spoon-billed Sandpipers died in them too: a bird included in a 2003 survey was taken from a trapper's net.



11,500 m

ESTIMATED LENGTH
OF NETS SET
TO TRAP BIRDS
IN 2012

0

NETS FOUND
AT THE SAME SITE
IN 2016

The team reported their findings to Guangdong Forestry Department, which is responsible for protection of wildlife. Discussions followed between Chinese birdwatchers and conservationists about how to help local government agencies address the trapping of migratory birds, and other forms of traditional but now illegal hunting, at key sites.

Since then Zhanjiang Bird Watching Society, and government officials from the Zhanjiang Forestry Department, have taken sustained measures to clear illegal mist nets. Educational activities carried out by HKBWS and Zhanjiang Bird Watching Society have helped raise awareness among local communities.

When the HKBWS team returned to Fucheng Estuary in late 2015, and again in 2016, they found the mudflats transformed, without a single mistnet to be seen. They also found record numbers of Spoon-billed Sandpipers. The new record of 30 birds at the end of 2015 did not stand for a month before it was broken by the late January 2016 count of **38**.



LESSONS LEARNED IN ONE COUNTRY ARE BEING SHARED AND SUPPORTED RIGHT ALONG THE FLYWAY TO BRING NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND GLOBAL BENEFITS

Ibrahim Khader
Regional Director,
Middle East



FLYWAYS ACROSS THE WORLD

BirdLife is leading efforts to end illegal trapping on the world's migratory flyways

There has been good progress with implementation of the BirdLife strategy for the Yellow Sea, a region that holds a number of stopover sites of vital importance to several shorebird species. BirdLife has joined with other organisations to advocate for the conservation of the Yellow Sea through transboundary World Heritage Site nomination. A motion was adopted at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in September 2016, where delegates from China and the Republic of Korea, among others, agreed on the next steps.

Major achievements in the fight against the illegal killing of birds around the Mediterranean included the launch of an EU Action Plan on poisoning, with support from SEO/BirdLife (BirdLife in Spain) and the RSPB (BirdLife in the UK), and the upscaling of efforts to tackle trapping at blackspots in nine countries. Following an intervention by BirdLife, the Saudi Government has issued a strong statement that the catching of migratory birds at state farms—where hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of birds are caught in mistnets—is illegal and must stop.

BirdLife was an active participant in the UN's World Migratory Bird Day. 2016's theme was the illegal killing, trapping and trade in migratory birds. Communications on social media reached 2.9 million people, including 940,000 video views and 29,000 likes and shares on Facebook and **Twitter**.



GOLD STANDARD FOR CONSERVATION

© Dario Podestà

Founded in BirdLife's IBAs, KBAs provide a global currency for the most important sites for conservation

In September 2016, eleven of the world's leading nature conservation organisations* launched a new initiative to map, monitor and conserve the most important places for life on earth. Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) are "sites that contribute to the global persistence of biodiversity", providing vital habitat in terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems.

KBAs originate in BirdLife International's Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) concept. In over 40 years of work, BirdLife Partners have identified more than 13,000 IBAs

with sites in almost every country in the world. Because some places are much richer in biodiversity than others, conserving a relatively modest network of sites is an effective way of ensuring the survival of a large number of species. IBAs are large enough to safeguard viable populations of a species, a group of species, or an entire avian community, but small enough to be conserved in their entirety.

The IBA network may be considered the minimum essential to ensure the survival of many of these species across their ranges and

throughout their life cycles. IBAs can show where current protected area systems miss key species, and how gaps can be bridged.

Similar approaches were subsequently developed by other organisations. By the launch of the KBA Partnership, the organisations had collectively identified over 18,000 sites, although their individual selection criteria varied. A common standard was required which would harmonise these approaches to provide a unified list of sites for use by decision makers, the conservation community, businesses and other stakeholders.

BirdLife was fully engaged in the development of the KBA Standard, which includes global criteria with quantitative thresholds that can be applied uniformly to plants, animals and ecosystems. The criteria are clustered into five categories: threatened biodiversity; geographically restricted biodiversity; ecological integrity; biological processes; and irreplaceability. The KBA Partnership will oversee



OVER THE PAST 40 YEARS, BIRDLIFE'S NETWORK OF 120 NATIONAL CONSERVATION ORGANISATIONS HAS SYSTEMATICALLY MAPPED AND CONSERVED THOUSANDS OF VITAL SITES FOR BIRDS, PROVIDING A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE KBA PARTNERSHIP

Patricia Zurita
BirdLife CEO

the application of these criteria, published in the Global Standard for the Identification of Key Biodiversity Areas. Data on KBAs is stored in the World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas (www.keybiodiversityareas.org). BirdLife manages both the database and the KBA website.

By systematically mapping internationally important sites, the KBA Partnership will ensure that scarce resources are directed to the places where they can most effectively be used. Key policy priorities include the expansion of protected area networks, and support for community-based conservation and private protected areas, together with guidance on business operations in KBAs, and financial institution safeguards for critical habitats. BirdLife and IUCN will co-host the KBA Secretariat, and will have a permanent seat on the KBA Committee, which is responsible for the governance and strategic direction of the partnership.

At the launch of the KBA Partnership, BirdLife CEO Patricia Zurita said: "We recognise the great benefits that a unified global currency for the most important sites for biodiversity conservation can provide to decision makers, the private and financial sector and the conservation community. We will ensure that the interests of the BirdLife Partnership, and 40 years of our work in over 120 countries to identify and conserve IBAs, are fully recognised, and provide a strong foundation for KBAs."

During the 13th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the role of KBAs in protected area planning was formally acknowledged, providing important opportunities for advocacy to national governments for site-based conservation **action**.



* BirdLife International, IUCN, Amphibian Survival Alliance, Conservation International, Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, Global Wildlife Conservation, IUCN, Natureserve, RSPB, Wildlife Conservation Society, and WWF.



BIRDLIFE PARTNERS CELEBRATED SUCCESS IN REDUCING THREATS TO SITES IN AUSTRIA, BULGARIA AND THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Zoltan Waliczky
Global IBA Programme Coordinator



CRITICAL ECOSYSTEMS

After the success of the first five-year, USD 10.9 million project, BirdLife secured a second grant from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund to update the Ecosystem Profile for the Mediterranean. BirdLife also won bids to work in the West Africa's Guinea Forests and Caribbean Hotspots

SOME IBAs IN LESS DANGER, BUT LIST OF SITES GROWS

One third of IBAs lack any formal protection, and a further 45% are only partially protected. An increasing number are under threat from damaging development, much of which fails to take environmental values into account

BirdLife's IBAs in Danger initiative provides an essential focus for decision-makers to act to prevent further damage to the most threatened sites of high biodiversity value.

The 2015 list of IBAs in Danger was launched in February 2016, with updates of the IBA Data Zone, and the IBAs in Danger Story Map. By the end of 2016, the list had grown from 338 to 422 IBAs.

The BirdLife Secretariat's IBAs in Danger Task Force supported national Partners in defending 32 IBAs in Danger globally. Letters of support from the global Secretariat were sent in

the cases of Siniya Island (United Arab Emirates) and Cross River National Park (Nigeria). Kaliakra in Bulgaria and three sites in Australia celebrated successes in reducing threats.

During 2016 three Partners (Kenya, Switzerland, and Slovenia) published national IBA monitoring reports. A collaborative effort between BirdLife and several other organisations, the LandSense project, started in September. This will help BirdLife Partners in Spain, Austria and Indonesia to monitor land use changes on IBAs, with the help of a mobile app and satellite data.

After more than ten years work by BirdLife Partner Nature Iraq, in difficult and often dangerous circumstances, to restore and protect the wetlands for nature and people, the Iraqi Southern Marshlands have been inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. And in Central Asia, the Western Tien Shan Mountains, an important refuge for biodiversity stretching through Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, have also been added to the UNESCO World Heritage List, thanks to tireless advocacy work by the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity of Kazakhstan (ACBK, BirdLife Partner).

As the first phase of CEPF investment in the Mediterranean Basin Hotspot, led by BirdLife, neared its end in 2016, CEPF announced that it would begin planning a new round of funding for the region. The ecosystem profile update process has been led by BirdLife International and a consortium including three BirdLife Partners from the Mediterranean – SEO (BirdLife in Spain), DOPPS (BirdLife in Slovenia) and Association Les Amis des Oiseaux (AAO, BirdLife in Tunisia).

The Guinean Forests of West Africa represent one of the earth's most biologically rich, but threatened ecosystems, covering 621,705 km². CEPF's investment in the Guinean Forests began 15 years ago. During the next five years (2016-2021), the West Africa Sub-Regional Office of BirdLife International, in its capacity as the Regional Implementation Team, will coordinate the disbursement of a \$7.5 million CEPF investment, through small and large grants to civil society organisations across the eleven countries situated in the Guinean Forests Hotspot.

In December 2016, CEPF announced that it would fund a consortium including BirdLife to start a Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) analysis in the Caribbean. BirdLife led the profiling process for the region in 2009, and from 2010 to 2016, CEPF awarded US\$6.9 million to support work in eight Caribbean countries.



THE ECOSYSTEM PROFILE UPDATE PROCESS HAS BEEN LED BY BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, AND BIRDLIFE WILL OVERSEE INVESTMENT OF US\$ 9 MILLION IN THE UPPER GUINEA FOREST IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Richard Grimmett
Director of Conservation

CEPF IN THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN, 2012-2016

10.9 million US\$

HAS BEEN INVESTED

106

PROJECTS HAVE RECEIVED GRANTS

93

ORGANISATIONS (INCLUDING 68 NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS) RECEIVED GRANTS

14

NEW PROTECTED AREAS WERE ESTABLISHED

146

COMMUNITIES BENEFITED FROM PROJECTS

14

THREATENED SPECIES HAVE BENEFITED, INCLUDING LEATHERBACK SEA TURTLE *DERMOCHELYS CORIACEA*, DALMATIAN PELICAN *PELECANUS CRISPUS* AND BARBARY MACAQUE *MACACA SYLVANUS*



ACTEON PLAN DELIVERS FOR PACIFIC ISLAND ENDEMIC

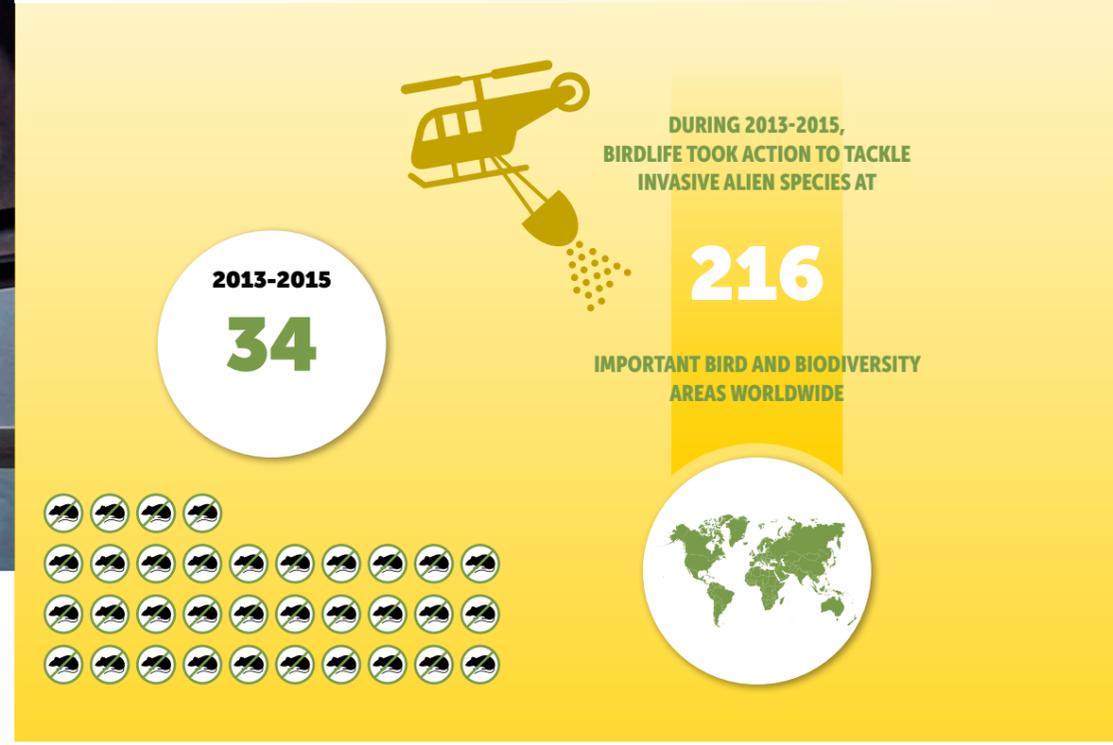
The removal of rats and cats from six remote islands in the Pacific was a win-win for birds and local people, as rare species returned to nest and coconut production soared



RARELY DO WE GET THE CHANCE TO HAVE SUCH A BIG IMPACT ON BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION WITH JUST ONE PROJECT. LOCAL PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES, INCLUDING ECOTOUR OPERATORS, WILL BE TRAINED IN BIOSECURITY. THE PRICE OF KEEPING THE ISLANDS RAT FREE IS PERPETUAL VIGILANCE

Steve Cranwell
Invasive Alien Species Programme Manager

NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL ERADICATIONS CARRIED OUT BY BIRDLIFE



2 016 saw the first anniversary of BirdLife’s most ambitious Pacific island-restoration project, eradicating invasive animals and plants from six remote islands in the Acteon and Gambier groups, French Polynesia. These island groups are the last refuge of the Critically Endangered Polynesian Ground-dove *Gallicolumba erythroptera*, once widespread across French Polynesia, but by 2015 reduced a maximum of 150 birds almost, all confined to one of two remaining rat-free atolls.

Before rats, along with feral cats, were brought to the islands, the ground-doves had no mammalian predators, and so were defenceless against them. Tuamotu Sandpiper *Prosobonia cancellata* and Polynesian Storm-petrel *Nesofregatta fuliginosa*, both globally Endangered and present on these islands, have similarly succumbed to these predators. Today three quarters of all globally threatened birds on islands are facing extinction because of IAS.

Although the success of the eradications will not be confirmed before 2017, there were noticeable differences in five of the six islands in 2016. If successful, the exercise will have more than doubled the secure habitat available to these globally threatened birds. Some will require assistance to establish populations in their new homes.

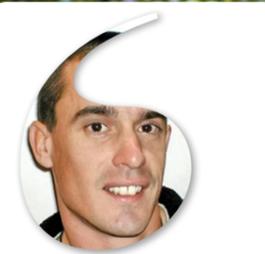
Removing rats and five other IAS species, including the ground-smothering, native plant-suppressing *Lantana camara*, benefits more than the islands’ endemic birds and vegetation. The people of these islands depend for their main source of income on copra, (dried coconut meat), a source of coconut oil widely used in the production of toiletries, foods and industrial products.

Without rats to damage the coconut crop and spoil stored and drying copra, local land managers reported a doubling of production in 2016. Project staff will help the Pa’umotu people manage coconut production in a way that generates income while being sensitive to native wildlife. They will also train local people and businesses, including ecotour operators, in biosecurity. The price of keeping the islands rat-free will be perpetual vigilance.

The cooperation of local people was critical to the success of the project, which was a joint operation by BirdLife, SOP MANU (BirdLife in French Polynesia) and Island Conservation. Altogether, 31 people from three continents were involved, and hundreds of tonnes of stores and equipment, including a helicopter, had to be shipped to some of the remotest specks of land on planet Earth.

NO ISLANDS TOO REMOTE

Invasive alien mammals are still the most likely agents of extinction for threatened birds in the Pacific. Over the last decade BirdLife and its partners have turned the tide by removing invasive animals from more than 30 Pacific islands



INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES ARE CAUSING AN EXTINCTION CRISIS ON THE WORLD'S ISLANDS, BUT OUR RESEARCH SHOWS THAT THIS IS ONE PROBLEM WE HAVE THE TOOLS TO TACKLE. THE RESULTS CAN BE SPECTACULARLY SUCCESSFUL

Stuart Butchart
Chief Scientist

BIRDS RETURN, COLONIES GROW, AND IGUANAS THRIVE AFTER INVASIVES REMOVAL

After Acteon and Gambier (see previous page), the next targets for BirdLife, SOP Manu and Island Conservation in the South Pacific are the Marquesas archipelago and Rapa Island.

Among the most remote islands in French Polynesia, 1,500 km from Tahiti, the Marquesas include six main islands, four smaller uninhabited islands, and many islets. The project covers eight priority islands, tackling both the technical challenges and the challenge of winning landowner and political support.

The aim is to secure predator-free habitat for 22 species of seabird including three that are globally threatened, plus two threatened landbirds and numerous threatened plants.

Rapa is the easternmost of French Polynesia's Austral Islands. Nine satellite islets, ranging in size from one to 40 hectares, surround it.

While little forest cover remains, the islands support an assemblage of eleven species of seabird unlike those found elsewhere in French Polynesia, including endemic forms of White-bellied Storm-petrel *Fregatta grallaria* and Newell's Shearwater *Puffinus*



ISOLATION MEANS VERY LITTLE CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN PROVIDED BEFORE NOW. BIRDLIFE WILL BRING ALL THE WEIGHT OF ITS EXPERIENCE OF WORKING WITH POLYNESIAN COMMUNITIES

Philippe Raust
President of Manu and
BirdLife Global Council

newelli. The Rapa Fruit-dove *Ptilinopus huttoni*, only found here, is globally Endangered.

Pacific rats, feral cats and goats are present throughout the islands, but their distribution is uncertain. Records of storm-petrels on four of the islets suggest these may be rat-free. Cats are present on the main island, so any seabirds survive only in inaccessible areas. Goats are widespread, as are feral cattle and horses, and overgrazing is leading to soil erosion, creating poor conditions for burrow-breeding petrels.

Rapa's isolation means very little conservation assistance has been provided to this small community of fewer than 500 residents. BirdLife will bring all the weight of its experience of working with Polynesian communities for the benefit of people as well as biodiversity.

At least 390 islands worldwide that support populations of Critically Endangered or Endangered species also hold introduced invasive species that are often the main threat. By eradicating them, BirdLife is securing the future for the species that remain and, over time, providing an opportunity for those which survive elsewhere to return and **recolonise**.

Following IAS removal, threatened species are returning to their island homes, sometimes from the very edge of extinction. One bird believed extinct for more than a century has made a near-miraculous return

Surveys on Monuriki Island, Fiji, in 2016, found that three species of native bird have re-established since the removal of feral goats and rats by BirdLife and partners including the local community. There were indications of an expansion in the Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Ardenna pacifica* colony.

The response of the endemic, Critically Endangered Fiji Crested Iguana *Brachylophus vitiensis* was particularly encouraging, with survey detection rates increasing by several orders of magnitude.

In the Cook Islands, rats were successfully removed from all but one islet on Suvarrow Atoll. The atoll supports 14 species of seabird including over one percent of global populations

of Sooty Tern *Onychoprion fuscatus*, Red-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon rubricauda* and Lesser Frigatebird *Fregata ariel*, and is a wintering site for the Vulnerable Bristle-thighed Curlew *Numenius tahitiensis*.

BirdLife International's Chief Scientist and contributors from Partners RSPB (BirdLife in the UK) and National Audubon Society (BirdLife in the USA) co-authored the paper *Invasive mammal eradication on islands results in substantial conservation gains* (PNAS April 12, 2016 vol. 113 no. 15 4033–4038).

The authors examined literature and databases, and interviewed IAS eradication experts. Altogether 786 populations of 321 native island species were documented or predicted

to benefit from invasive mammal eradication on 261 islands globally.

Birds were the most frequent beneficiaries, representing 69% of identified species. Four species had their Red List extinction risk categories reduced as a direct result. The authors estimated that 107 highly-threatened vertebrate species had increased in numbers and/or range.

For example, Scripps's Murrelet *Synthliboramphus scrippsi* is no longer a candidate for listing on the U.S. Endangered Species Act following rat eradication on Anacapa Island, and the New Zealand Storm-petrel *Fregatta maoriana*, thought extinct for more than 150 years, was recently found breeding on Little Barrier Island following cat and rat **eradication**.



HUGE PROTECTED FOREST

© Jonathan C. Eames

JIGSAW COMPLETED

After years of research, advocacy, community engagement and partnership, BirdLife has secured full protection of one of Asia's most important forests, where people and nature can now live in harmony

In May 2016, BirdLife celebrated the secured protection of 132,321 hectares of the Western Siem Pang Important Bird and Biodiversity Area. After years of lobbying by BirdLife's Cambodia Programme, the Royal Government of Cambodia established the 65,389 ha Western Siem Pang Wildlife Sanctuary, and upgraded the protection status of the 66,932 ha Siem Pang Protected Forest to Wildlife Sanctuary.

Western Siem Pang is an IBA in Danger, and one of the BirdLife Forests of Hope Programme's sites. Together, these protected areas cover a significant part of the distributions of five Critically Endangered bird species, and provide secure habitat for a number of declining large mammal species, including wild cattle, monkeys and the globally Endangered Eld's deer *Rucervus eldii*. Resources used sustainably by local communities are also now secure.

A team of rangers helps prevent illegal activities such as poaching and timber cutting. They also monitor threatened wildlife, helping for example to protect and report on the nests of the two Critically Endangered ibis species and three Critically Endangered vulture species that breed in Western Siem Pang.

The site's importance for wildlife is enhanced by its location, connecting Virachey National Park in Cambodia to Xe Pian National Protected Area in Laos, which in turn is contiguous with Chu Mom Ray National Park in Vietnam. Adding Western Siem Pang creates a unique block of more than 700,000 ha of protected transboundary forest, allowing free movement, and better connected, more viable populations, of some of the rarest large animal and bird species in Asia.

Ninety percent of Western Siem Pang is covered by forest typical of the original vegetation of central Indochina. The forest

is relatively open in many places, denser in others, and has a grassy understorey. Scattered throughout the forest are a number of pools and seasonally wet meadows (locally known as *trapaengs*) which are of great importance to the site's biodiversity.

Local communities depend on *trapaengs* for water, fish and edible plants. Research by BirdLife has shown that grazing cattle and buffalo create clearings in the forest, and their trampling and wallowing makes marshy depressions which deepen into sizeable pools. This ecological role was historically performed by the wild ungulates now largely absent from the area.

For various reasons, local people had been giving up their livestock. BirdLife is encouraging people to build up their herds again, and providing help with husbandry and disease prevention.

Western Siem Pang holds the largest part of the global population of the Critically Endangered White-shouldered Ibis *Pseudibis davisoni*, which is now largely confined to Cambodia with smaller numbers in adjacent Laos. *Trapaengs* are the favoured habitat of the White-shouldered Ibis in the breeding season.

Trapaengs are also vital habitat for the Critically Endangered Giant Ibis *Thaumatibis gigantea*, which also has the largest fragment of its global population in Western Siem Pang.

Together with Local Conservation Groups established with BirdLife's support, BirdLife has developed a *trapaeng* management protocol which ensures that these vital wetlands continue to benefit biodiversity and people.

New grants secured in 2016 will enable a zonation process to be undertaken, assigning the entire forest site into community, conservation and strictly protected areas, as required by Cambodian law.



SUCCESS AT SIEM PANG COMES FROM WORKING IN CLOSE COLLABORATION WITH OUR GOVERNMENT PARTNERS

Bou Vorsak
BirdLife Cambodia
Programme Manager



1,000,000,000,000 TREES.

THAT'S JUST THE START



TRILLION TREES INTENDS TO RAISE 40 MILLION GBE FOR FIVE LANDSCAPE-SCALE FOREST CONSERVATION ACTIONS IN THE FIRST FIVE YEARS

Bryna Griffin
Head of Forests Programme



LOCAL COMMUNITIES ARE BEING SUPPORTED TO MANAGE FOREST RESOURCES SUSTAINABLY FOR THEIR OWN BENEFIT WHILE PROTECTING GLOBALLY THREATENED ENDEMIC WILDLIFE

Thandiwe Chikomo
Head, West Africa
Sub Regional Office

FOREST HIGHLIGHTS



The world is losing 10 billion trees a year. BirdLife is one of three of the world's biggest conservation organisations which have got together to put lost forests back

2016 saw the launch of Trillion Trees, an unprecedented, long term partnership between three of the world's largest conservation organisations—BirdLife International, WWF-UK, and the Wildlife Conservation Society—to help end deforestation and restore tree cover.

The three partners estimate that the world is losing 10 billion trees a year. They are dedicating their joint efforts to keeping existing trees standing, and restoring trees to the places they once grew. Each brings to the partnership a well-established global network of regional, national and local organisations. BirdLife alone is active in 120 countries through its national Partners.

The Trillion Trees partners will encourage ethical investment in forests; find new sources of funding for existing and future protected forests, including community-managed



forests; and work with corporations both to develop plans to eliminate deforestation from their supply chains, and help them meet their commitments.

They will work to overcome the obstacles to results-based payment schemes for carbon sequestration in developing countries, and raise funding for measures such as the protection of "green infrastructure" and the use of trees alongside agriculture to build resilience against Climate Change.

Restore UK, a grant-making charitable foundation, has supported the creation of Trillion Trees. With an initial five million GBE grant, Restore UK has provided critical investment to the partnership and set the target of raising 40 million GBE from public and private sources for five new, landscape-scale forest conservation actions in the first five years.

BirdLife's Forests Programme works with local communities to implement locally appropriate approaches to forest governance, management and finance

In 2016, significant progress was made towards all three goals of BirdLife's Forests Programme. Key forest sites were protected, long-term sustainable management approaches advanced, and policies advocated to address the drivers of deforestation.

In September, the Liberian government established Gola Forest National Park. The 80,000 hectare national park is contiguous with the Gola Rainforest National Park in Sierra Leone. Together, the protected areas fulfil the vision of a 160,000 ha transboundary "peace park", protecting one of the most important remaining tracts of the Upper Guinea Forest of West Africa. This success is the result of years of work by BirdLife Partners, the Society for Conservation of Nature in Liberia (SCNL), and Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL), with the

support of the wider BirdLife family, especially the RSPB (UK) and Vogelbescherming (The Netherlands).

In 2016, BirdLife's Gola Forest project in Sierra Leone was validated to VCS (Verified Carbon Standard) and CCB (Climate, Community and Biodiversity) standards. Gola is the first VCS-validated REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) project in West Africa.

BirdLife's work to protect Harapan Forest, one of the largest remaining tracts of lowland rain forest in Sumatra, received a major boost from the Danish Government, which will fund the next three years of work, laying the foundations for the future financial sustainability of Harapan.

The BirdLife Policy team led on the development of a large European

Commission project on forest governance in Asia and the Pacific. Providing around five million Euros over five years, the project supports "Strengthening Non-State Actor Involvement in Forest Governance in Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Papua New Guinea".

BirdLife's work on commodities which are driving deforestation focuses on rubber, cocoa, and timber. BirdLife's review of the voluntary "sustainability guidelines" of the International Rubber Study Group (IRSG) indicated that they were extremely weak and lacked stakeholder input. In response, BirdLife proposed the first-ever round-table discussion between companies, associations and civil society, which took place in May. It is hoped this will lead to a sustainable natural rubber certification system.



© Jane Stout

BRINGING TREES, BEES AND BIRDS BACK TO THE SHEA PARKLANDS

BirdLife projects funded by the UK's Darwin Initiative are restoring sustainable practices to the cultivation of highly-valued traditional crops, ensuring better livelihoods and healthier ecosystems. 2016 saw the completion of the research and design phase of BirdLife's project, "Building resilient landscapes and livelihoods in Burkina Faso's Shea Parklands"

Shea trees *Vitellaria paradoxa* grow in 21 countries across the sub-Saharan Sudan-Guinea zone. The fruit, mostly collected and processed by women, provides cash for an estimated 18 million families otherwise living in extreme poverty.

Shea butter is probably most familiar from cosmetic uses, but over 90% of the US\$120 million export crop goes to the confectionery industry as a cocoa butter substitute. Most however remains in the region, where it is the primary edible oil for 80 million people. The first pulp is a vital food during the hungry season.

Current management of the shea parklands is greatly reducing tree and plant diversity, with increased use of tractors, herbicides and pesticides, and removal of trees seen as lacking commercial value. It takes almost 8 kg of firewood to produce 1 kg of shea butter, further contributing to the loss of on-farm trees. Habitat degradation and pollinator decline have been associated with a reduction in shea yields of over 40% in 20 years. This already dry area is rapidly approaching desertification.

Steep declines of Afro-Palaearctic migrant birds that overwinter in the shea zone have been linked to the loss of preferred insect-rich tree species. Hungry migrants newly arrived from the north avoid shea trees, which appear not to provide the invertebrate food they need at this season. In a survey of 2,965 shea trees, only three migratory birds were observed. BirdLife's project, "Trees, Bees and



NATURAMA HAS A LONG HISTORY OF SUCCESSFUL INTERVENTIONS DEVELOPED JOINTLY WITH LOCAL PEOPLE IN BURKINA FASO

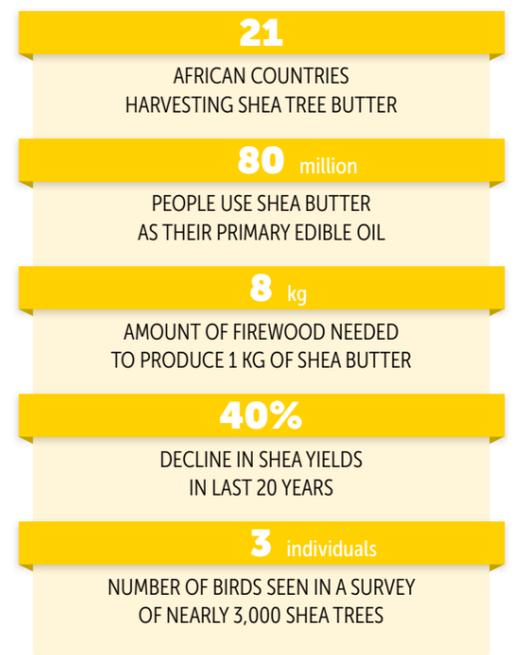
Idrissa Zeba
Executive Director of Naturama and BirdLife Global Council

Birds* (TBB) is working with ten communities around Burkina Faso's Kaboré Tambi National Park (KTNP), educating local people and local government about the importance of pollinators and birds to healthy ecosystems, and providing technical support and training, practical agroforestry solutions to biodiversity loss, and additional livelihood opportunities.

Drawing from the TBB project, guidelines for sustainable shea production are being developed for the Global Shea Alliance, a non-profit organisation with members from 31 countries. The guidelines will support integration of biodiversity into parkland management across the shea industry.

The BirdLife International Secretariat is responsible for overall project management, and in collaboration with BirdLife Partners RSPB (UK) and VBN (The Netherlands), and Trinity College Dublin, contributes conservation, development and pollination science expertise. The project directly supports the agrobiodiversity work of Naturama, the BirdLife Partner in Burkina Faso, expanding their professional competence and capacity to support the improved management of the Shea Parklands, and increase the resilience of rural communities.

In the focal communities surrounding KTNP, 500 individuals will have received TBB training by the second year of the project. Naturama use a network of trained "pollination ambassadors" to spread the word to other villages, ultimately reaching 1,800 households.





YERBA MATE PROJECT BRANCHES OUT



COMMUNITIES HIGHLIGHTS

South America's favourite hot drink just got bird-friendly. Paraguay's Atlantic Forest communities want to be part of it

The Darwin Initiative-funded project, "Yerba mate – a market-driven model for conserving Paraguay's Atlantic Forest" involves a partnership between BirdLife Partner Guyra Paraguay, indigenous Mbya Guarani people, *campesino* (rural people), the private sector, government and civil society.

The San Rafael Reserve protects over 72,000 ha of Atlantic Forest, a biodiversity hotspot containing more threatened endemic bird species than any other neotropical region. Forest communities are extremely isolated and live in severe poverty, lacking basic health, education and sanitation services. The Mbya Guarani depend heavily on forest resources, but poverty forces them, like the *campesino*, to clear Atlantic Forest for subsistence and cash-crop agriculture, despite the ratification of a "zero deforestation" law in 2006.

The leaves of yerba mate *Ilex paraguariensis* are used to make a traditional hot drink in central and southern South America. It is usually grown in full sun, requiring forest to be cleared, but there is growing demand for organic yerba, grown in the shade of forest trees. The higher prices paid for organic,



shade-grown yerba mate compensate for slightly lower yields and increased labour.

The project will establish 50 ha of organic shade-grown yerba mate, and help communities to develop local institutions and capacity for production, collective negotiation, marketing and sale of their product. The proceeds from sales will be distributed by the communities to meet local development needs. The experience will be used to inform best practice policies for conservation of Atlantic Forest elsewhere using the shade-grown yerba mate model.

Local people have engaged enthusiastically with the project, with additional communities asking to become part of it. The municipality and local mayor are committed. A notable achievement was the visit by indigenous and *campesino* San Rafael communities to the Kue Tuvy Reserve, elsewhere in Paraguay's Atlantic Forest, to learn from groups already involved in successful shade-grown yerba mate production. The private sector partners have been very supportive in providing advice and training on cultivation marketing, certification and sale of shade-grown organic yerba **mate**.

BirdLife is empowering people to conserve and manage their local IBAs, and hand them on to the next generation

BirdLife's work on empowering local communities benefited in Europe and Central Asia from the EU Horizon 2020 fund, which enabled the recruitment of a project officer whose responsibilities include the development of the IBA Caretaker network. Funding was confirmed from the Cambridge Conservation Initiative Collaborative Fund for a project exploring the potential and effectiveness of "Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures". BirdLife's Science team will investigate the potential of community conservation areas and other local initiatives that support site conservation in pilot countries.

The project to enhance the management of natural resources in the marshes of Iraq was completed successfully in 2016. Working directly with the Ma'dan marsh dwellers, the project has fostered and improved their socio-economic circumstances by, for example, helping establish a base of handcraft producers that can preserve the cultural diversity of the marshes, revive handicrafts, and reduce pressures on natural resources.

In Tanzania, BirdLife secured USAID support to develop an integrated management plan for the Mara Wetlands, and build the capacity of stakeholders to implement the plan. A new

Local Conservation Group–North Mara Water User Association–is involved in the initiative. The association represents eight villages around the Mara who use wetland resources for their livelihoods.

The 2016 season of Spring Alive in Europe saw another year of impressive achievements, reaching nearly five million people, with 571 events and 294 conservation actions. Over 69,000 children engaged directly with Spring Alive, and 91,330 observations of migratory birds were recorded on the website. In Asia, participation in *Welcome to the Birds* increased from previous years, with 14 BirdLife Partner countries now taking part. Significantly, activities were mostly self-funded by Partners – demonstrating their commitment and the wider success and interest of this annual event.

The Ethno-ornithology World Archive (EWA) work continued with the University of Oxford, and Lynx Edicion. In 2016, the EWA was embedded in the Open World Research Initiative (OWRI) project on "Creative Multilingualism". Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, this provides support to BirdLife to focus on the relationship between language and biological diversity, including along critical migratory **flyways**.



BIRDLIFE'S COMMITMENT TO INCLUSIVENESS AND EQUALITY IS STRONG. BOTH PLAY A ROLE IN THE WAY PEOPLE PERCEIVE AND USE NATURAL RESOURCES

Charlotte Mathiassen
Social science advisor

- 4,000**
LOCAL CONSERVATION GROUPS ESTABLISHED BY BIRDLIFE
- 2.8 million**
VOLUNTEERS MOBILISED TO CARRY OUT CONSERVATION ACTION BY BIRDLIFE
- 1.9 million**
YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED IN BIRDLIFE ACTIVITIES
- 1 million**
PEOPLE ENGAGED IN BIRDLIFE CITIZEN SCIENCE PROJECTS
ALL 2013-2015



WE LISTENED TO THE MESSENGERS



NOW WE'RE ACTING

The Messengers, the 2015 global synthesis report by BirdLife International and the National Audubon Society (BirdLife in the USA), showed that birds have already been negatively affected by climate change through distribution shifts, and mismatches in the timing of migration, breeding and food supply. These impacts will only worsen as temperatures continue to rise. But there is hope: across the globe BirdLife Partners are pioneering solutions to help species adapt

The Climate Action Plan for the Americas provides a roadmap to a sustainable and resilient future for ecosystems across Latin America and the Caribbean, and for the birds and people they support. It is guiding BirdLife's national Partners to effect change within their own countries, and uniting the full BirdLife Americas network to achieve results across the region over the next five years.

Equally importantly, it establishes a shared framework for collaboration with NGOs, governments, academia and other key institutions as they work together to address climate change.

As the first comprehensive plan addressing the impact of climate change on birds and ecosystems in the region, the plan draws its strength from a continental-scale scientific analysis, and the contributions of partners with expertise and experience in conservation and science, as well as a deep connection to, and understanding of, the region's socio-economic, political, and environmental context.

The year-long development of the plan involved staff from BirdLife International, Audubon, and BirdLife Partners from 12 Latin American countries¹. In addition to the comprehensive regional plan, each Partner developed a detailed national plan based on input from their national governments and



THE BIRDLIFE PARTNERSHIP BELIEVES THAT IF WE ACT NOW, WE CAN STILL FOSTER A VIBRANT, CLIMATE-RESILIENT FUTURE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Esteban Lasso
Regional Director,
Americas

other organisations. Regional and national strategies were developed simultaneously, to promote sharing and incorporation of best practices, science and ideas across boundaries.

The continental-scale analysis of climate change's impacts on birds, which underpins the Action Plan, found that, on average, the 3,801 bird species of Latin America and the Caribbean stand to lose half their range by mid-century. The ranges of most forest bird species will shrink, on average, to 41% of their current size.

The vision for 2022 is of a comprehensive network of effectively managed, climate-resilient Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas and other critical sites, across Latin America and the Caribbean, that will accommodate range shifts. The Action Plan will improve the conservation status of IBAs covering at least 74 million hectares, and maintain and enhance their carbon capture and storage capacity, to help birds and people adapt to climate change. Currently, 84% of IBAs have no or inadequate protection.

The network will include coastal wetland IBAs covering 8.6 million ha, inland and high-altitude wetland IBAs covering 16.3 million ha, 13.7 million ha of native grassland, and 35.3 million ha of forest IBAs.

A region-wide Climate Watch programme will strengthen bird monitoring for climate change across all IBAs, complement national and regional monitoring systems, inform policy decisions, and support adaptive management.

By 2022, the intention is for governments of at least eight countries to incorporate nature-based solutions for climate change mitigation and adaptation into Nationally Determined Contributions, national adaptation plans, or other relevant policies.

At the same time, the Partnership will work to strengthen the financial, institutional and technical capacity of Partners and other stakeholders in at least 12 countries, equipping them to implement ecosystem-based mitigation and adaptation projects at key IBAs, and to help shape national climate and biodiversity policy.

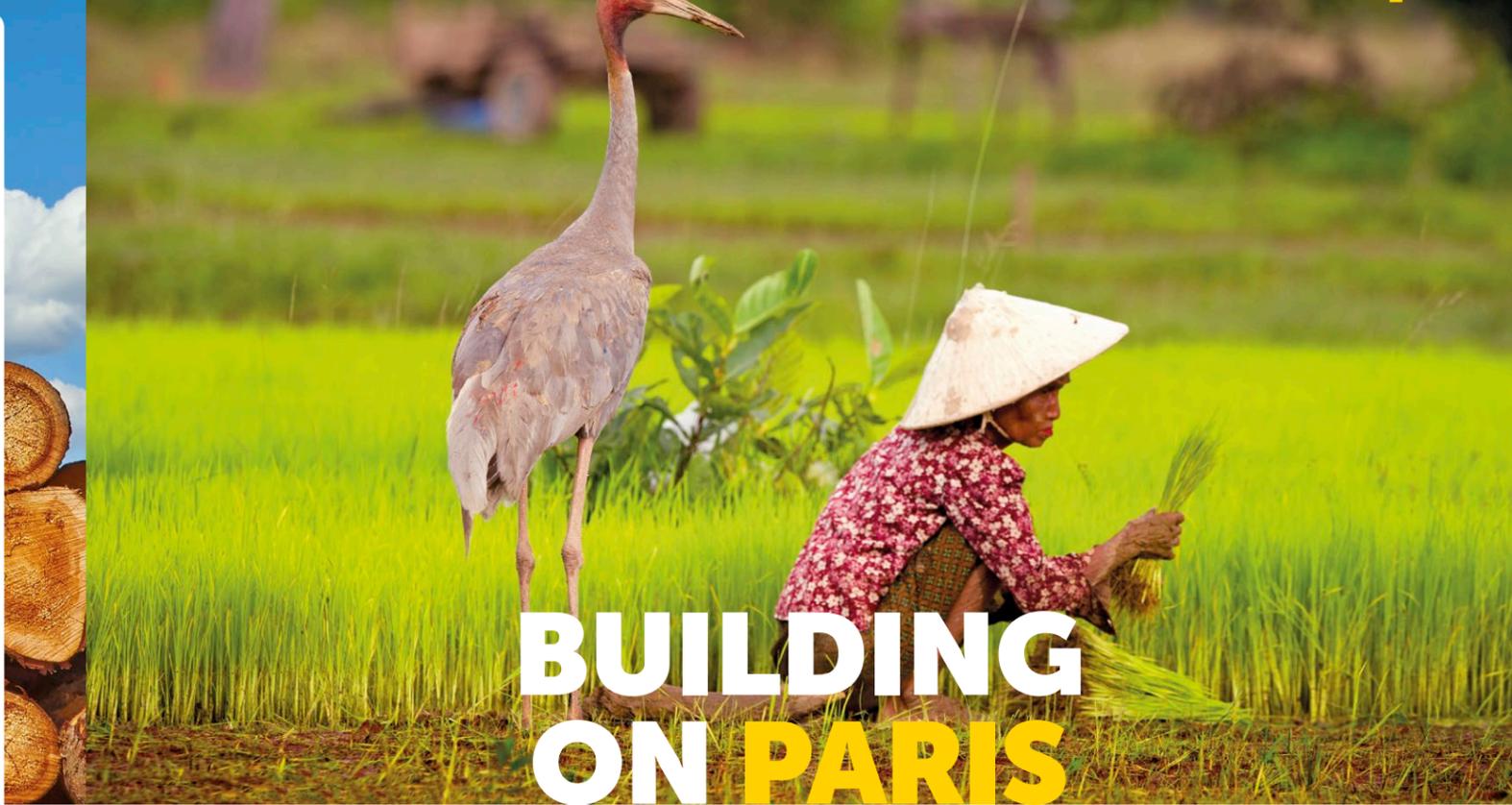
The BirdLife Partnership believes that if we act now, we can still foster a vibrant, climate-resilient future for the forests, grasslands, beaches and mangroves of Latin America and the Caribbean, support sustainable economies, ensure the provision of ecosystem services essential for people, and help birds and biodiversity **thrive**.

¹ Argentina, The Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay




THIS REPORT PROVIDES CLEAR EVIDENCE THAT THE EU'S RENEWABLE ENERGY POLICIES HAVE LED TO INCREASED HARVESTING OF WHOLE TREES, AND TO CONTINUED USE OF FOOD CROPS FOR ENERGY

Sini Eräjää
Bioenergy Officer



RENEWABLE IS NOT THE SAME AS SUSTAINABLE:

WHY BIOENERGY IS IN BIRDLIFE'S BLACK BOOK

BirdLife in Europe and Central Asia works tirelessly to expose the myths surrounding bioenergy, which makes up two-thirds of the EC's proposed "renewable" energy mix

The *Black Book of Bioenergy*, published in mid-November, ahead of the EU's Renewable Energy Package presented in graphic form eight case studies that revealed the dark side of the bioenergy business. It provided a rude shock for those who comfortably assume that the mass clearance of natural forest, and the displacement of food crops to make room for biomass and oil crops, are problems confined to the developing world.

There were horror stories from Slovakia, Italy and Finland (government-subsidised logging of natural forests so that power stations can be fed with whole trees), France and Spain (power plants requiring hundreds of thousands of tonnes of wood chips to be imported annually), and Germany (maize grown for biogas takes up to 75% of arable land in Lower Saxony, putting pressure on the state's high-nature-value grasslands).

Earlier in the year, BirdLife was one of eleven NGOs which contributed to the publication, *A New EU Sustainable Bioenergy Policy*, which provided detailed guidelines to ensure that bioenergy production does not negatively impact protected areas, natural forests, land used for food production or food security; that human and labour rights and local community access and control over natural resources are respected.

The EU's "Clean" Energy Package proved to be all about competitiveness, efficiency and a fair deal for consumers. Following intensive advocacy by BirdLife, there was significant progress on the phasing out of first generation biofuels, but on forest biomass it failed to address most of BirdLife's concerns. There was no attempt to limit the use of whole trees, stumps and deadwood, which seriously harms **biodiversity**.

65%

EUROPE'S RENEWABLE OUTPUT FROM BIOENERGY

72%

INCREASE IN THE USE OF WOOD FOR BIOENERGY SINCE 2007 IN SLOVAKIA

Tripled

EU IMPORTS OF PALM OIL FROM COLOMBIA 2013-2015. PALM OIL PLANTATIONS ARE REPLACING FOREST AND LAND FOR FOOD CROPS

75%

PROPORTION OF ARABLE LAND GROWING MAIZE FOR BIOGAS IN LOWER SAXONY, GERMANY

BirdLife's Climate Change programme is furthering research and understanding of the impacts of climate change, and advocating responses that recognise the role of biodiversity and ecosystems

Building on its successful engagement with the Paris Climate Change Agreement, BirdLife delivered targeted advocacy on nature-based solutions, land-use accounting and safeguards at the UNFCCC "intersessional" held in early 2016, and at the 22nd Conference of the Parties in Morocco in November 2016. The engagement work included running side events, making presentations, and hosting receptions with key stakeholders at the convention conferences.

Following consultations with a range of stakeholders, and a workshop convened by Association pour la Conservation de la Nature au Rwanda (ACNR, BirdLife in Rwanda) in July 2016, the BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat, together with BirdLife Partners in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda, developed a *Climate Resilient Altitudinal Gradient (CRAG) Intervention Plan for the Kivu/Rusizi Basin*. The plan will guide actions to



RESTORING ECOSYSTEMS CAN HELP REDUCE GREENHOUSE GASES, AND PROVIDE PEOPLE WITH A NATURAL DEFENCE AGAINST ITS IMPACTS

Melanie Heath
Director of Science, Policy and Information

enhance landscape resilience for biodiversity and local communities.

BirdLife is coordinating an exciting new Energy Task Force—a multi-stakeholder platform that works towards reconciling renewable energy developments with the conservation of migratory species. This initiative, led by the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), recognises the crucial importance of energy from renewable sources to attain the targets of the Paris Agreement, and therefore the need to mainstream conservation of migratory species across the energy sector.

The Energy Task Force works with governments, multilateral environmental agreements, investors, academic institutions and NGOs to apply guidance and tools through international and national partnerships, provide recommendations, and address knowledge **gaps**.



NEW CONSERVATION LEADERS ANNOUNCED

AND THE RETURN OF AN OLD ONE

This year's crop included some exciting proposals, and the spectacular payoff from some of the CLP earlier winners

In April the Conservation Leadership Programme (CLP) announced the winners of the 2016 Team Awards. The CLP granted 18 awards, worth a total of \$262,650, comprising 15 Future Conservationist Awards, two Conservation Follow-Up Awards, and one Conservation Leadership Award.

The CLP owes its success to the enduring relationship between three conservation partner organisations: BirdLife International,

Fauna & Flora International, and the Wildlife Conservation Society.

Among the winners was a team that will assess the population of the Western Tragopan *Tragopan melanocephalus* in India's Daranghati Wildlife Sanctuary, where relatively undisturbed forests are a crucial stronghold for this and many other endangered pheasant species. Another team won for an innovative research project that will gather data on aquatic reptiles



© Oris

in Sarawak, West Malaysia. Another will study Mexico's mesophotic coral ecosystems.

It was "third time lucky" for Ida Ansharyani and her team, whose persistence paid off when they received a coveted Follow-Up Award, enabling them to continue their vital work in promoting sustainable fishing in Sumbawa, Indonesia. "We have been shortlisted three times since our first CLP project in 2011, and we would not stop applying! We are now ready to raise our initiative to a new level," said Ida.

Other threatened species and habitats that stand to benefit from this year's award-winning projects include marine mammals in Malaysia and Mozambique, neglected amphibians in China and Mexico, wetland-dependent flora in South Africa, the wildlife of Angola's national parks, avian hotspots in India, and Georgia's migrating raptors.

Also in 2016, it was announced that one of the Philippines' rarest birds, the target of a 2012 CLP-funded project, will benefit from the declaration of a new protected area. Confined to the island of Luzon, where it clings on in a few fragments of lowland forest, the Critically Endangered Isabela Oriole *Oriolus isabellae* was presumed extinct until rediscovered in 1993. The ORIS project (a contraction of the bird's scientific name) was launched with a CLP Future Conservationist Award. It attracted widespread participation from local communities, and the active involvement of academics and government officials. Now, after several years of work by the ORIS team to create a conservation plan for the bird, and



BIRDLIFE CHOOSES, FUNDS AND TRAINS EARLY-CAREER LEADERS FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, WHO ARE TACKLING PRIORITY CONSERVATION CHALLENGES

Kiragu Mwangi
Senior Capacity Development Manager

promote it as a flagship for the conservation of the forests, officials in the municipality of Baggao have declared a 5,500 hectare tract of forest a wildlife sanctuary. It encompasses habitat vital to other threatened endemic species, including the spectacular Philippine Eagle *Pithecophaga jefferyi*, which has also benefited from CLP support in the past.

The CLP connection with the new sanctuary goes deeper. This breakthrough was achieved under the auspices of the Mabuwaya Foundation, established in 2003 after receiving the first of three CLP grants. Funding from CLP played a vital role in building the capacity of the foundation in its crucial early days.

With funding from the British Birdfair, BirdLife will launch in 2017 a new programme, the BirdLife-Birdfair Young Conservation Leaders (YCL) Awards. BirdLife's YCL consolidates investments in developing the capacity of Young Conservation Leaders within the CLP and BirdLife-BirdFair project, an initiative that is set to grow in the future.

Awards in 2017 will be granted to projects at Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas in Africa. Teams will receive GB£10,000 of grant funding, the opportunity to attend an international management and leadership training course, and mentoring and career development support throughout their projects and beyond. 2017.



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QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

WILL STRENGTHEN PARTNERS

In 2015 BirdLife introduced the Quality Assurance System (QAS) to monitor the quality of our growing network, using measurable criteria agreed by the whole Partnership. The results were compiled and disseminated in 2016

The QAS results highlighted lots of good news across the Partnership, and the information will be used to promote exchange of skills and information on strengths and areas of excellence. This in turn helps our Partnership to take quicker collective action to deal with weak areas, as well as promoting our strengths and leadership.

As a comprehensive "one-stop" tool the QAS fulfils several objectives:

- › Demonstrating the impact of the BirdLife Partnership as a whole
- › Rallying our Partnership to common objectives that are identified in BirdLife's Partnership 2020 strategy
- › Allowing easy measurement of progress against the 2020 strategy
- › Measuring the conservation impact and the development of each Partner
- › Enabling Partners to see and show the contribution that they are making as part of BirdLife International Partnership Strategy
- › Identifying issues needing support and action.

Joint coordinators were formally appointed in June 2016 to provide leadership in responding to the QAS follow-up actions, and facilitate progress against programme development plans. They will develop tools and actions to address the specific areas identified as most important and urgent in organisational development terms (Strategic & Operational Planning, Supporter & Membership Development, and Organisational Finance Management & Fundraising). They have produced the *Partner Strengthening Plan* (template and guidelines) to help with planning for immediate interventions.



THE QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM HAS GIVEN THE BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP A ROBUST WAY TO COLLECT THE EVIDENCE AND INTERPRET THE TRUE STATUS OF THE BIRDLIFE PARTNERSHIP ON ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION DELIVERY

Hazell Shokellu Thompson
Director Partnership and Regions

The Buddy System was re-energised to provide focal points to support Partners in interpreting and responding to their results, by creating an individual Strengthening Plan. Partners and their respective buddies are now working to develop plans by the end of the first quarter of 2017.

Development of BirdLife's Capacity Development Fund made progress in 2016. There has been noteworthy progress in the design of the governance and operational structures, and a strong initial fundraising success with significant commitments from Partners and High Net Worth Individuals for both grants and lending. A major grant application of £1.82m was submitted to a foundation for the Technical Assistance and Grant-making component.

Partner to Partner (P2P) Cooperation is being re-energised with a renewed vision, and progress was strong in 2016. The goal is to expand and diversify the number and range of BirdLife Partners who can offer technical and/or financial assistance, and secure new resources to facilitate greater cooperation.

An assessment was undertaken of 20 well-established BirdLife Partners to build an understanding of their interest, motivation and willingness to maintain, expand or begin P2P activities. The research revealed that there is enormous potential, which was reinforced by five Partners attending the P2P meeting in September 2016 for the first time. The sixth P2P meeting brought together 15 Partners from three continents, making it the best attended so far.



TEN YEARS OF ALBATROSS TASK FORCE

© Stephanie Winnard

The ATF began its work in **South Africa** in 2006. By 2013, albatross bycatch in the hake trawl fishery had been reduced by an astounding 99%. From the ATF's at-sea monitoring in 2016, 100% of vessels were fully compliant with mitigation measures. No bycatch was recorded in the pelagic longline fleet, and just one albatross was killed in monitored trawl fleets.

Since regulations came into force in **Namibia**, 100% of demersal trawl and longline vessels have been fitted with bird-scaring lines. ATF estimates for the two Namibian fleets suggested former annual seabird mortality in excess of 25,000. In 2016, bycatch was recorded on only one trawl trip, during bad weather, when bird-scaring lines were blown away from the cable.

In **Brazil**, the ATF team completed six trips at sea with the longline fleet, monitoring compliance with regulations that came into place in 2014. They recorded one bycatch incident, by a non-compliant vessel.

In **Argentina** the the main trawl fleet has been responsible for the deaths of 13,500 Black-browed Albatrosses per year. The ATF expects this to be reduced by over 85%, following adoption of a measure that requires bird-scaring lines on all vessels by May 2018.



OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS WE HAVE BUILT A LOT OF EXPERIENCE IN HOW TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF ALBATROSS BYCATCH IN FISHERIES. THE KEY IS WORKING ALONG WITH THE FISHING INDUSTRY TO DO SO

Cleo Small
BirdLife Marine
Programme Coordinator

When the ATF was formed, the focus was on large industrial fleets. The ATF has begun working with purse seine and gillnet fleets in Peru, Ecuador and Chile, which can number thousands of smaller boats. Each boat may only kill a few birds per year, but when scaled up for the whole fleet, these fisheries are having a considerable impact.

Historically, the deaths of thousands of seabirds washed up along the coast of **Chile** were attributed to the purse seine fleet. Through collaboration with a net construction company, the design of the net was changed to remove excessive floating mesh. Experiments found modified nets reduced seabird bycatch by over 98%.

Mitigation measures for gillnet fisheries are poorly developed, but they kill around 400,000 seabirds worldwide every year. In **Peru**, the ATF have been hanging lights on the nets to make them more visible to vulnerable species. Incredibly, when the lights were used there was no bycatch, without any reduction in fish catch.

The ATF is now sharing its bycatch mitigation experience with other fisheries around the world, supporting BirdLife's European Seabird Task Force, and providing Best Practice advice for distant-water fleets operating on the **High Seas**.



In its tenth anniversary year the Albatross Task Force (ATF) made good progress in reducing bycatch of seabirds. Fisheries with some of the worst histories of seabird deaths recorded bycatch close to zero, and near-complete compliance with mitigation measures

Fifteen of the 22 albatross species are at risk of extinction, and the rest are considered Near Threatened. Avoidable deaths through interactions with fishing vessels have led to huge population declines, with some breeding colonies down by half since the 1990s.

Until the ATF began operations, it is estimated that 100,000 albatrosses a year were caught on baited longline hooks and drowned. The birds are also struck by trawl cables and dragged underwater. These numbers have

been substantially reduced in some fleets by innovations cooperatively developed by the ATF and fishing fleets.

Hosted in each country by the BirdLife Partner or a local NGO, teams of seabird-bycatch mitigation practitioners were established to tackle ten of the fisheries with the highest known impact on seabirds. Seven had seabird bycatch regulations in place at the start of 2016, and by the end of the year, Argentina's trawl fleets were preparing to join them.

GILLNET BYCATCH MITIGATION

High-vis panels reduce bycatch, and increase fish catch



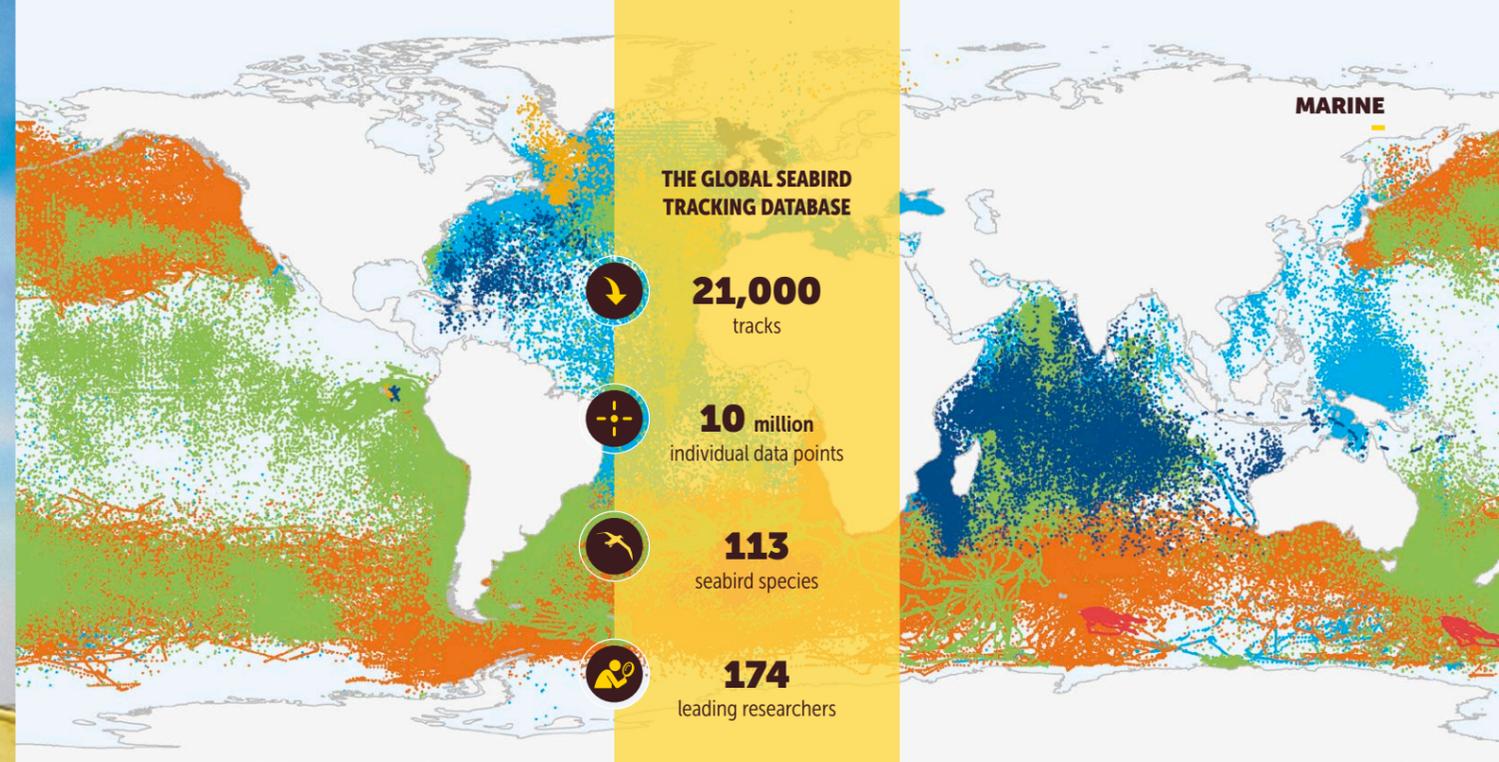
In 2016, the BirdLife Partnership has taken great steps towards the ultimate goal of reducing seabird deaths in gillnets. We worked with the Icelandic lumpfish gillnet fleet to estimate the extent of seabird bycatch in the fishery, allowing us to identify hotspots and the most affected species—Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle*.

Our Seabird Task Force teams in Lithuania, Poland and Portugal carried out tests of innovative mitigation measures with gillnet fishers. Of the measures tested, net illumination, which involves attaching lights to the top of gillnets, showed the most promise. This followed successful trials of similar lighting in Peru by the Albatross Task Force.



OUR GLOBAL REVIEW OF SEABIRD BYCATCH IN GILLNETS ESTIMATED THAT 400,000 SEABIRDS ARE KILLED IN GILLNET FISHERIES EVERY YEAR

Rory Crawford
Gillnet Programme Manager



MARINE SITES AND TRACKING DATA

BirdLife uses seabird movement data to identify and protect marine sites

In 2016 over 100 new marine IBAs were identified, including 27 in Japan, 20 in Europe, six in the Antarctic, more than 60 in Russia and 33 in the Falkland Islands/Malvinas. Many of these depended on data from the Global Seabird Tracking Database, established by BirdLife in 2003 and now one of the largest conservation collaborations in the world.

More than 4 million locations were added to the tracking database, totalling more than 10 million data points and now covering 113 species including albatrosses, petrels, shearwaters, penguins, auks, gannets, terns, gulls and skuas. Seabird data is provided by over 120 research institutes (including BirdLife Partners), and more than 170 scientists.

2016 was the third and final year of the Alcyon Project, funded by the MAVA Foundation, which aimed to identify the most important marine sites in West Africa. Analysis of thousands of bird locations in the tracking



CONSERVATIONISTS CAN LOSE SIGHT OF THE BIG PICTURE IF THERE'S NO PLACE TO SHARE THE INFORMATION. THIS IS WHERE THE SEABIRD TRACKING DATABASE COMES INTO PLAY

Maria Dias
Senior Marine Science Officer

database enabled the project to delineate foraging hotspots for seabirds in the region. Thirteen new marine IBAs were identified, and another four updated.

Thousands of kilometers away in the NE Atlantic, the Evlanov Seamount and Basin marine Important Bird and Biodiversity Area was identified with the help of more than 60 seabird scientists, using data on more than 20 seabird species. This site has been proposed as a Marine Protected Area. If accepted, it would be the first of its kind in the high seas to be identified using seabird tracking data as the main source of evidence.

Also in 2016, in collaboration with the British Antarctic Survey and other scientists, BirdLife compiled tracking data for three penguin species breeding in the Antarctic Peninsula. The result was a network of marine sites for Gentoo *Pygoscelis papua*, Chinstrap *P. antarcticus* and Adélie *P. adeliae* Penguins, the first of its kind in those waters.



#NATUREALERT

BIRDLIFE AND THE POWER OF MANY

Through its unprecedented mobilisation of citizens, the BirdLife Partnership may have saved the European Union 'Nature Directives' and, with them, 27,000 important wildlife sites and the biggest network of protected areas on the planet

BirdLife's achievements can often be traced back to the power of many—many individuals, communities and organisations working as one for the benefit of nature and people. 2016 showed the power of many in action, as half a million people across the European Union responded to the BirdLife-led internet campaign #NatureAlert, and called upon European politicians to save the EU's "Nature Directives".

In 2013 the European Commission announced a review of the EU Birds and Habitats Directives. Officially, the review was to assess whether the Nature Directives were fit for purpose, but the widely-held fear was that, with Commission President Juncker's new emphasis on business competitiveness, this was an attempt to weaken 35 years of protection for European sites of high biodiversity value.

The Birds Directive (adopted in 1979) requires the establishment of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds, and the Habitats Directive (1992) requires Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to be designated for other species, and for threatened habitats. Together, SPAs and SACs form a network of sites called Natura 2000.

There are more than 27,000 Natura 2000 sites, covering one-fifth of Europe's land area, which makes it by far the world's largest protected area network. More than 70% of Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) in Europe, identified by BirdLife's European national



NEVER BEFORE HAVE EU LEADERS AND POLITICIANS RECEIVED SUCH AN OUTPOURING OF PUBLIC OPINION

Angelo Caserta
Regional Director,
Europe and Central Asia

Partners, have been designated as SPAs, and are part of the Natura 2000 network.

In response to the proposed review, BirdLife brought together data and experience, studies and stories, from Partners across Europe and their thousands of volunteers. The evidence unequivocally demonstrated that the Nature Directives are indeed fit for purpose, that they work well when properly implemented (which is another question altogether), and that they can deliver the intended benefits for birds and habitats, nature and people.

DOF (BirdLife in Denmark), for example, found that most Danish IBAs considered to have 'good conservation status' were those protected by EU law.

With the case for maintaining the Directives established, BirdLife turned its attention to securing widespread support from EU citizens, by alerting all two million members of its European Partner organisations, and engaging with other conservation NGOs and their supporters. Well over half-a-million citizens (an overwhelming 94% of respondents) demanded retention of the Directives unchanged. This was the largest public response to any European issue ever.

Politicians listened. Both the European Parliament and EU Environment Ministers endorsed the will of their citizens, and expressed political support for the Nature Directives. The European Commission published an initial analysis of the Directives in 2016, which found no case for reopening them.

Nevertheless, the Commission is keeping its options open, refusing to be drawn on the Directives' future. Accordingly, while the #NatureAlert campaign may be over, BirdLife's commitment to the Nature Directives, and determination to challenge any attempt to weaken them, are as strong as **ever**.





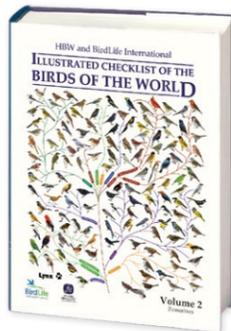
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PRACTICAL TAXONOMY

The HBW/BirdLife checklist is guiding conservation of some cryptic species that might have slipped away before we knew about them

December 2016 saw the completion of two huge and closely linked collaborative efforts. One was the comprehensive 2016 Red List update, carried out by BirdLife as the IUCN authority on the conservation status of birds. The other was the publication of the second volume of the *HBW and BirdLife International Illustrated Checklist of the Birds of the World*.

As the Red List authority for birds, BirdLife leads the assessment of all the world's bird species. However, by 2009, the question of how many species there were, and which populations needed to be assessed as species, was



becoming harder to answer. More and papers were being published, in a bewildering variety of outlets, by taxonomists working to different "species concepts", who were lumping two or more species into one, or, far more often, splitting species into two or more, using criteria which were far from consistent.

There were plenty of cases where experts and checklists disagreed, and not merely because of their adherence to one species concept or another. There was also the near-certainty that between them, museum-based taxonomists, overstretched field ornithologists and holidaying birdwatchers were missing the

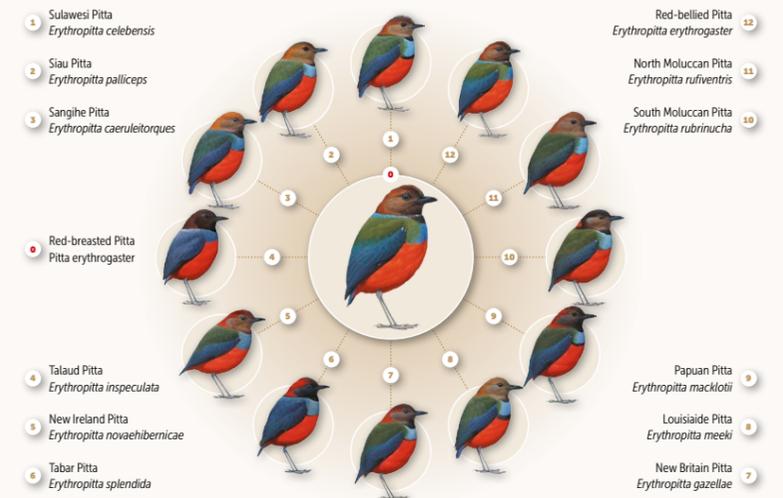
subtle but distinctive characters that separate some valid and threatened species from more common and widespread forms.

BirdLife has a bigger stake in taxonomy than any other group of people with an interest in birds. We have responsibilities to national legislative authorities and conservation agencies, international agreements and conventions, the IBA/KBA programme, the myriad people who work to conserve bird species, and those who fund the work.

With the recent completion of the 17-volume *Handbook of the Birds of the World* (HBW), BirdLife had a natural partner in this endeavour. Using recently published criteria based on the biological species concept, but making use of differences in plumage, voice and behaviour associated with breeding, a joint team from BirdLife and HBW publisher Lynx Edicions set out to assess and revise the taxonomic status of all the world's birds.

Given the magnitude of the task, the speed with which they completed it is remarkable; however, they had all the resources of HBW and BirdLife's Taxonomic Working Group to draw on. Volume 1, covering non-passerines, was published in the summer of 2014. The 4549 species included 462 "new" species, with 46 parrots, 36 hummingbirds and 26 owls previously unrecognised. In the most extreme example, the Red-bellied Pitta *Pitta erythrogaster*, originally Least Concern on the Red List, was split into twelve distinct species, four of them globally threatened.

The implication that previous approaches to bird taxonomy had underestimated avian diversity by 10% was confirmed with the publication of Volume 2 on passerines, which covered 6592 extant species (and 57 extinct),



WE'VE TRIED OUR BEST TO MAKE THIS CHECKLIST AS PRACTICAL AND ENGAGING AS POSSIBLE. IT HAS FOUR FIRSTS: WE ILLUSTRATE THE BIRDS THEMSELVES, WE PROVIDE RANGE MAPS, WE CARRY DETAILED EXPLANATIONS OF OUR TAXONOMIC ARRANGEMENTS, AND WE MAKE MANY OF THOSE ARRANGEMENTS FROM EXTENSIVE PROACTIVE RESEARCH

Nigel Collar
Research Fellow

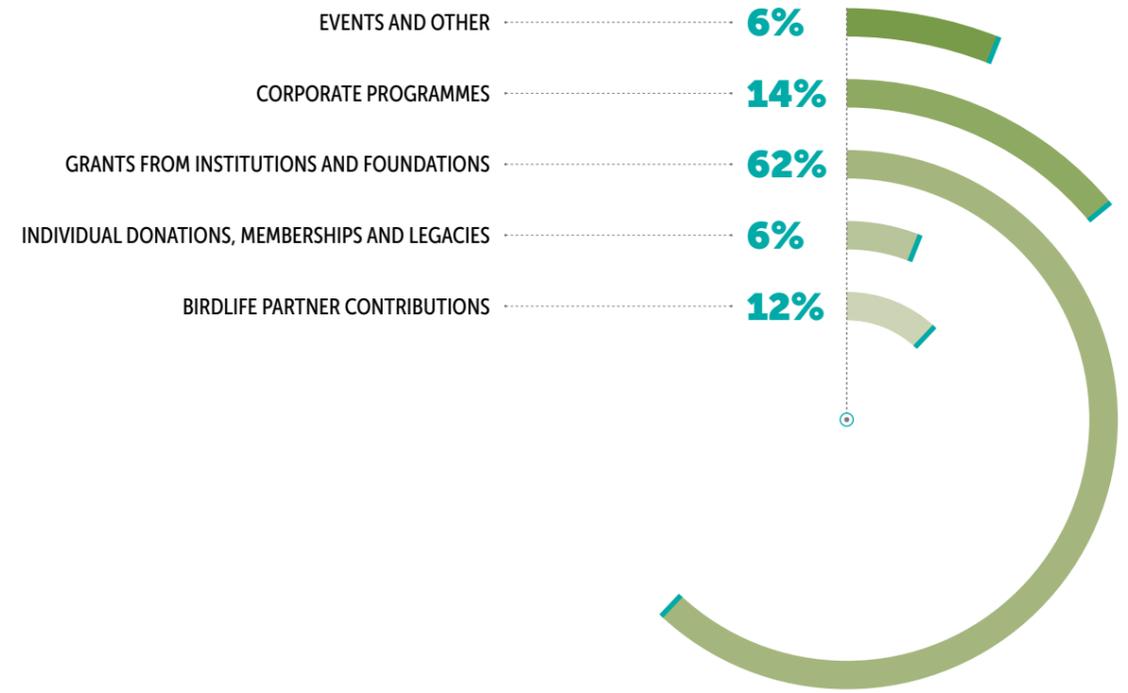
and included 41 lumps and 628 splits when compared with the original HBW taxonomy.

To understand how important sound bird taxonomy can be, take the case of the Bearded Helmetcrest *Oxypogon guerinii*. Until Volume 1 of the Checklist was published, this was regarded as one species; application of the new criteria made it clear there were four. Blue-bearded Helmetcrest *O. cyanoaemus*, had not been seen since 1946. Confined to the Santa Marta massif in Colombia, its habitat has been almost entirely destroyed. In March 2015 a dedicated search was made, and three birds were found in a tiny area of páramo that had not yet been burnt. The species is clearly right on the brink of extinction, but without the Checklist we would not even know of its **existence**.

- Over **11,500** MUSEUM SPECIMENS MEASURED FOR STATISTICAL ANALYSIS. THE NUMBER EXAMINED FOR PLUMAGE PATTERNS WAS MANY TIMES GREATER
- 9,000** TAXONOMIC AND DISTRIBUTIONAL PAPERS REFERRED TO (NOT INCLUDING FIELD GUIDES, FAMILY MONOGRAPHS AND HANDBOOKS).
- 877** NUMBER OF BIRDS' SONGS REFERRED TO A WORLD-CLASS BIRD RECORDIST, TO QUANTIFY DIFFERENCES IN THEIR VOCALISATIONS
- 369** THE NUMBER OF "HOME GROWN" SPLITS BY THE HBW-BIRDLIFE INITIATIVE (37% OF ALL ACCEPTED NEW SPLITS)



INCOME



FINANCES 2016

The BirdLife Secretariat's total income increased by 16.8% to £16.0 million in 2016 compared to £13.7 million in 2015. The Secretariat's total expenditure did however increase by 16.4%, in line with income, to £16.3 million in 2016 compared to £14.0 million in 2015.

The Secretariat results unfortunately showed a deficit on unrestricted funds of £1.5million compared to a deficit of £0.4million in 2015. This was mainly due to continued planned investment and a weak pound which increased our cost base.

Following a successful application to the Charity Commission in 2017 to convert the Rare Bird Club fund from permanent to expendable, BirdLife has total expendable endowment funds of £2.0m, all of which are unrestricted and available for general purposes (at the Trustees discretion). Effectively the available free reserves of the charity are £1.5m, giving flexibility going forwards.

	2016 £'000	2015 £'000
INCOME		
BirdLife Partners	1,879	1,967
Individual donations, memberships and legacies	971	1,215
Grants from institutions and foundations	9,994	7,646
Corporate programmes	2,175	1,988
Events and other	1,002	883
Total Income	16,021	13,699
EXPENDITURE		
Fundraising costs	865	652
Charitable expenditure		
Conservation Science	1,023	842
Conservation Policy	1,776	1,446
Conservation Programmes	10,733	9,284
Governance costs	411	340
Global support	1,519	1,475
Total Expenditure	16,327	14,039
Core (deficit)/surplus	(1,502)	(375)
Net movement in project funds	1,403	137

EXPENDITURE

