



BIRDLIFE AFRICA NEWSLETTER



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A MESSAGE FROM THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S DESK

Welcome to our first issue of the BirdLife Africa Newsletter in 2023.

As we begin implementing the new BirdLife strategy for the next 10 years, our work to save Nature is more important than ever. From forest conservation in Madagascar to improving community livelihoods in Ghana, our partners continue making great strides in conservation. We hope you will enjoy our partners' stories from around the continent, and that you will share this newsletter with your friends and supporters.

Happy reading and thank you for your continued support.

Kariuki Ndong'ang'a

Regional Director for Africa, BirdLife International

FOUND...

DUSKY TETRAKA (CROSSLEYIA TENEBROSA)

In late December 2022, an expedition in the remote rainforests of northeast Madagascar recorded Dusky Tetraka, an endemic to the country. The last documented sighting of Dusky Tetraka was in 1999, making it one of the top 10 most wanted lost birds by the [Search for Lost Birds](#), a collaboration between Re:wild, American Bird Conservancy (BirdLife in the US) and BirdLife International. Read more about this [discovery](#).

BIRDLIFE AFRICA INAUGURATES A NEW OFFICE IN LA MAISON DE LA CONSERVATION (CONSERVATION HOUSE) WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE MAVA FOUNDATION FOR NATURE



BirdLife Africa, PRCM, Wetlands International, RAMPAO with the two representatives of MAVA Foundation during the inauguration ceremony on March 1st 2023 in Dakar, Senegal © La Maison de la Conservation (LMC)

By Cheikh A. Bamba Ndao

BirdLife Africa has officially inaugurated a brand-new headquarters in Dakar within the Maison de la Conservation offered by the MAVA Foundation for Nature. After a 28-year presence in West Africa

Supporting various conservation initiatives the MAVA Foundation for Nature exits the region, counting among its legacies, the La Maison de la conservation which will house four environmental organizations namely BirdLife Africa, Wetlands International Africa West Coast and Gulf of Guinea (WIACO), the Regional Partnership for Coastal and Marine Conservation in West Africa (PRCM), the Regional Network of Marine Protected Areas in West Africa (RAMPAO).

The inauguration ceremony which took place on March 1, 2023, at the Capucine building, Zone B district in Dakar was graced by Ms. Lynda Mansson, Executive Director MAVA Foundation, and Ms. Charlotte Karibuhoye Saïd, MAVA Program Director for West Africa.

Also noteworthy was the participation of several representatives of state organizations and BirdLife's strategic partners such as the Royal Society for the Birds Protection (RSPB) and the Nature Communities and Development (NCD).

The inauguration of this headquarters marks an important step in creating synergies between conservation organizations for the benefit of biodiversity management in Senegal and West Africa.

Given the special relationship between the four organizations and the MAVA Foundation, a warm gesture of recognition was made to their representatives.



BirdLife Africa, PRCM, Wetlands International, RAMPAO with the two representatives of MAVA Foundation during the inauguration ceremony on March 1st 2023 in Dakar, Senegal © La Maison de la Conservation (LMC)

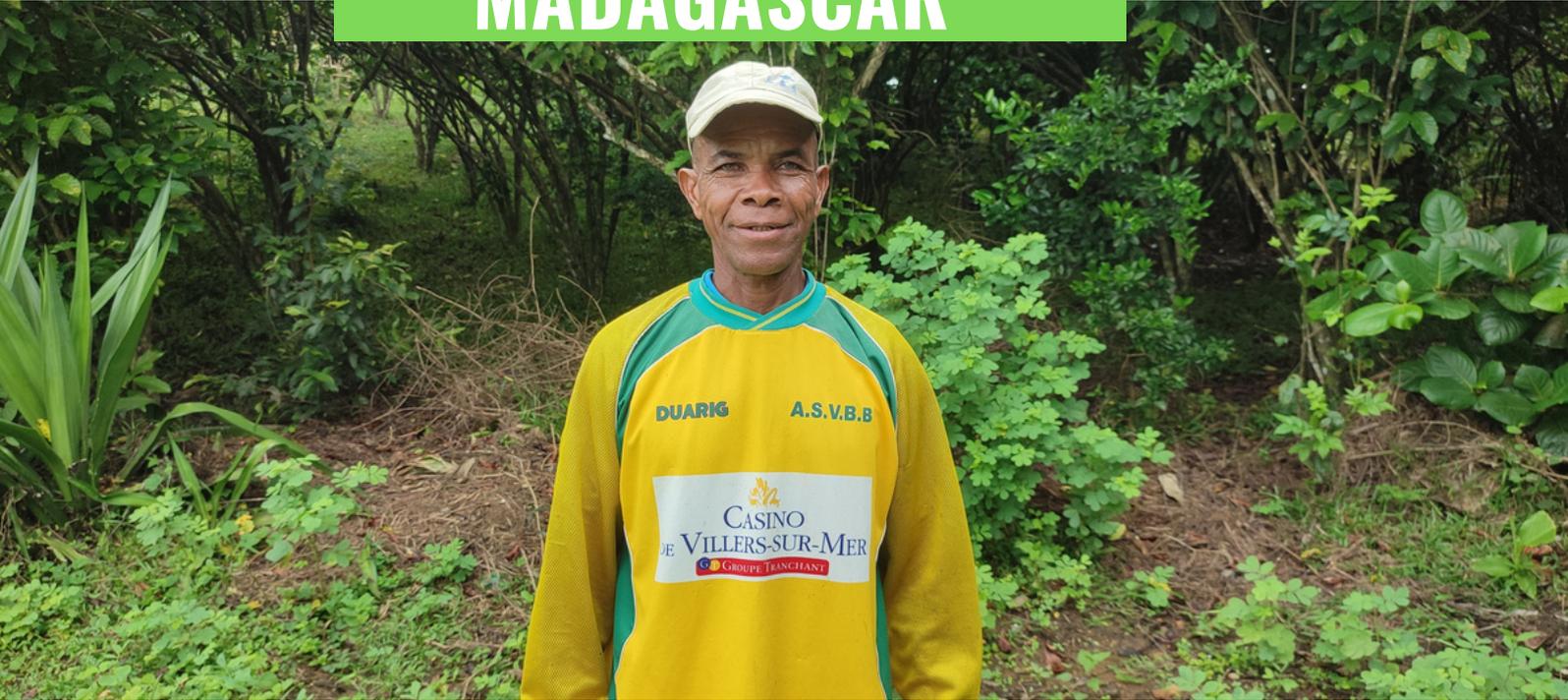
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This new headquarters funded by the MAVA Foundation for Nature will indeed strengthen the historic collaboration between conservation actors. This synergy of actions will allow us to better develop, promote and implement strategies to meet the priorities of countries and sub-regional organizations

Dr. Kariuki Ndang'ang'a
Regional Director for Africa at BirdLife International.

THE FOREST GUARDIAN OF MADAGASCAR



Resamy Damy in his vegetable farm © Asity Madagascar

By **Andriamandranto Ravoahangy and Lewis Kihumba**

Madagascar is renowned for its rich fauna and flora, with more than 80% of its species found nowhere else on Earth. However, the country has one of the highest deforestation rates in the world, having lost more than 23% of its forest cover since 2000, driven by local subsistence agriculture. Located in southeast Madagascar, the 58000 ha Tsitongambarika tropical forest is home to unique wildlife. New species of plants and animals continue to be discovered, while the forest is a vital water supply for local communities in addition, to supporting livelihoods. Deforestation, driven by local subsistence agriculture is a major threat to the forest. Since 2006, Asity Madagascar (BirdLife Partner) has promoted conservation of Tsitongambarika, leading to its definitive status of Protected Area in 2015. Asity is also working with local communities who live around the forest, supporting at least 10,000 households since 2008. In 2022, 427 families were supported, thanks to support from the Hempel Foundation and Vanguard. Marius Andriamorosata from Asity sat down with 47-year-old Resamy Damy from Andramanka village one of the project areas, who explains why he is part of the forest preservation activities.

Marius: Thank you Resamy for agreeing to talk to us. Now tell me, why is the Tsitongambarika forest important to you?

Resamy: For a long time, we have depended on the Tsitongambrika forest for survival. Coming from a large family in Andramanaka where I was the sole bread winner, I was involved in illegal activities in the forest to eke out a living.

Marius: Tell us more about the activities you were involved in.

Resamy: I was involved in illegal logging where we would engage in clearing the forests for cassava plantations. The timber gotten from this logging would be sold in the market. Within a month, we would clear at least 10 trees for timber or an area of about 2 hectares a year for cassava plantation.

Marius: What are some of the challenges you faced when carrying out this work?

Resamy: This work is not for the faint hearted. Sometimes, we would run into forest patrols who would confiscate our equipment and arrest us. Other times, we were not so lucky, due to unexpected patrols led by the Local Based Community group (COBAs), which would disrupt our work.

Marius: What made you stop the illegal logging activities?

Resamy: I happened to be in a local community event, where Asity conducted a sensitization event on the need to protect Tsitongambrika. At this event, they explained how illegal logging activities were affecting the forest and subsequently us. I became very interested. Afterwards, I attended some more sensitization events by Asity which made me realize the damage we were doing to the forest. After these events,



Vegetable farming in other areas of Tsitongambarika © Asity Madagascar

I decided to stop these activities that harmed the forest. When Asity began supporting local people to stop illegal logging activities and start income generating activities, I was among the first people to take up the offer.

This was in 2012 and since then, I have never looked back. Asity helped me begin bee rearing. As a result of increased income from the bee rearing, and with support from Asity, I was able to start vegetable farming in 2018, and now I will be able to buy Zebus (humped cattle) and land this year. I can now take my five children to school, all thanks to these income generating activities, supported by Asity. My income now is much better, in comparison to the income I was getting as an illegal logger.

Marius: How has the communities' attitude on forest conservation changed?

Resamy: We have seen an increasing number of locals stop these illegal activities, and take up the income generating activities supported by Asity.

People are increasingly aware that protecting the forest is ensuring a good life for us and our future, and have joined forest conservation efforts. I have also been involved in several Asity's sensitization campaigns.



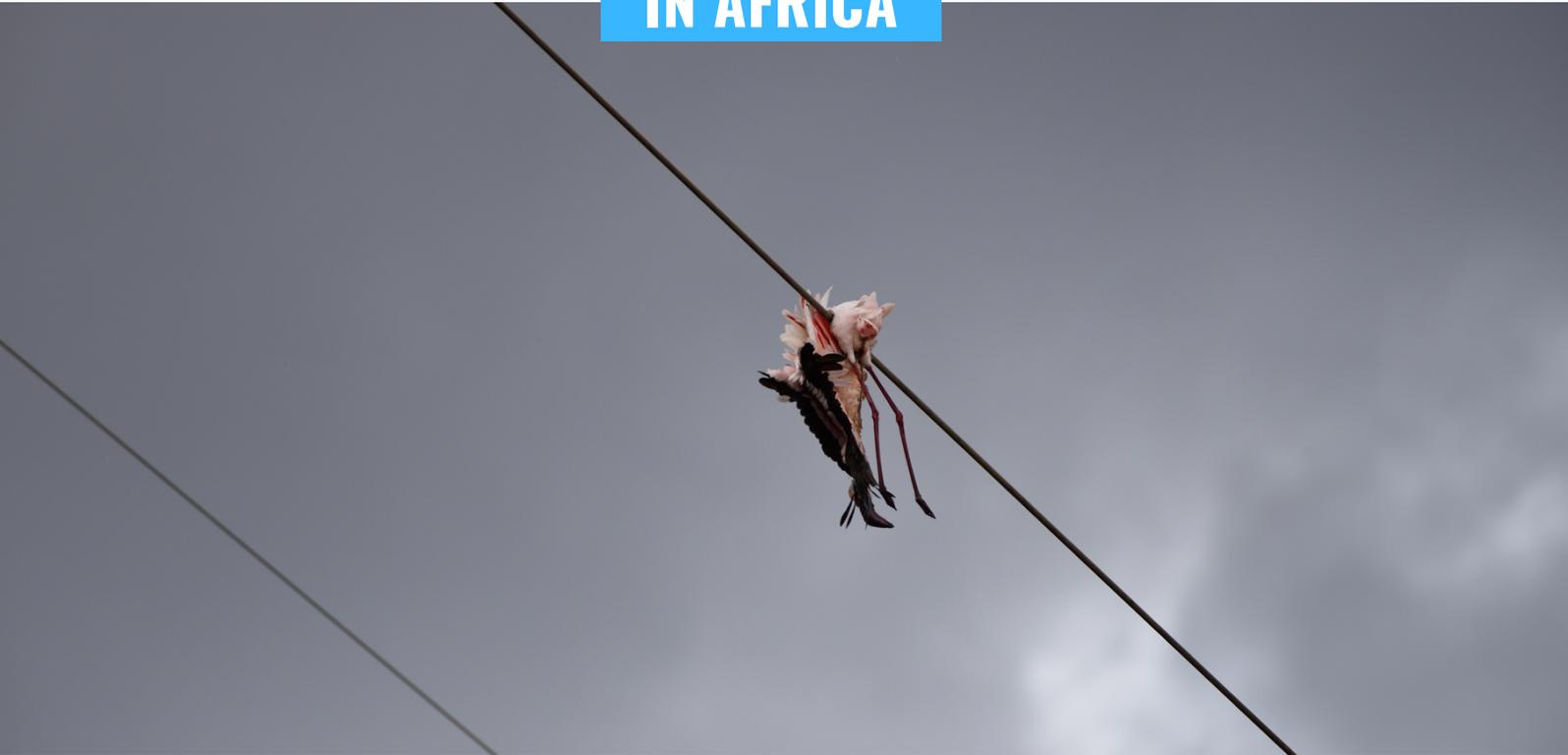
Resamy Damy in his bee rearing area © Asity Madagascar

Marius: What is your parting shot?

Resamy: When I was a kid, looking for firewood was easy, as we could find it anywhere. Nowadays due to forest clearance, we have to spend long hours searching for firewood, an indication of what can happen if we destroy our forest resource. I am a testament that local communities can play a key role in preserving forests, while benefiting from these resources without destroying them.

I will continue being involved in Asity's efforts to ensure that the Tsitongambrika forest is preserved for future generations.

BALANCING CONSERVATION AND ENERGY DEVELOPMENTS IN AFRICA



Dead flamingo hanging on powerline in Kenya - © Nature Kenya

By Lewis Kihumba

It is estimated that more than 600 million people have no access to electricity in Sub Saharan Africa. As energy infrastructure, including renewable energy continues to be rolled out across the continent, the risk to biodiversity particularly birds increase. BirdLife International, the world's largest Nature Conservation Partnership is addressing this challenge through various interventions, as Alex Ngari, BirdLife International's Migratory Birds & Flyways Program Manager for Africa, highlights:

What is the energy uptake landscape like in Africa?

Africa has the lowest access to electricity per capita; demand outstrips access leading to more than 600 million people without connection to electricity or just over 40% access rate.

This significantly impedes to the continent's socio-economic development. Access to energy is critical for unlocking economic potential of countries. It is estimated that the energy deficiency costs Africa 2-4% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annually.

Energy demand has been on the rise, over the last 15 years, the continent has witnessed a 60% increase in uptake of renewable energy.

As demand for energy grows, what are the effects of energy developments?

Energy sector developments can have significant positive & negative impacts on people and biodiversity. Where energy infrastructure is poorly deployed, can attract opposition from the public, leading to delayed implementation.

In other instances, the project may be redesigned or stopped altogether, which all have cost implications. Where projects are implemented without biodiversity considerations, wildlife including birds and other vulnerable species are put in danger.

It is estimated that, millions of birds die from electrocution or collision with poorly deployed energy infrastructure every year, which in turn leads to power disruptions and thus significant economic losses.

What are some of the biodiversity aspects being impacted by renewable energy development?

A good example is the long distance migratory Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*) which is listed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as globally Endangered. Thousands of these birds have died due to electrocution and collision with poorly designed powerlines. In South Africa, where most studies have been conducted on the subject, 2294 dead birds were counted under a powerline in a span of 5 years up to 2011.

Amur Falcon (*Falco amurensis*), Jackal Buzzard, (*Buteo rufofuscus*) and Common Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*) have been the most frequently reported raptor fatalities. Further, there is displacement and disturbance, habitat destruction, barrier effect, and injuries which affect these birds and other biodiversity.

How does this impact energy utilities?

Negative interactions between birds and poorly-deployed energy infrastructure mean unreliable power supply to customers, revenue losses, project delays, expensive retrofitting of grids and loss of customers.

What are some of the solutions developed by BirdLife to address the negative impacts of energy developments on nature?

BirdLife and Partners are collaborating with stakeholders in the energy sector to provide practical and scalable solutions focused on four vital areas of energy production:

- **Planning:** Use of Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) at policy or program level to help in informed decision making for these developments, is critical. BirdLife has developed risk screening tools, such as Avian Sensitivity Tool for Energy Planning (AVISTEP) which is being rolled out in Africa and elsewhere. AVISTEP is an online open-source application to help decision makers identify where renewable energy infrastructure could impact birds and should therefore be avoided, ensuring that facilities are developed in the most appropriate locations.
- **Generation:** Use of mitigation measures such as Shut Down on Demand (SHOD) to prevent bird collisions. SHOD involves stopping turbines from rotating to every collisions with oncoming vulnerable bird(s) and restarting when the collision threat is no more.
- **Power Transmission and Distribution:** Use of nature friendly powerline infrastructure. This also entails use of mitigation measures to improve visibility and insulating wires to avoid collisions and electrocutions respectively.

In collaboration with governments and developers, BirdLife has implemented these solutions across the continent. In Egypt, the 240 MW Gabal-el Zayt wind farm located in the western coast of the Gulf of Suez, has some of the best wind regimes for power generation.

A staggering 400,000 birds from 41 migratory species have been recorded within the wind farm during spring migration alone. To reduce the threat of bird collision, BirdLife engaged various stakeholders and developed SHOD protocol for the wind farm, consequently averting massive bird mortalities and power losses.

At Port Sudan, a 31-km long powerline constructed in the 1950s was estimated to have killed thousands of long distance migratory Egyptian Vultures, which also led to severe power outages.

In 2013, BirdLife engaged NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) partners, power utilities, and government agencies in Sudan to replace the powerline with an insulated one. To date, no bird electrocutions from the line have been reported, power outages have disappeared. This intervention was the recipient of the 2015 "Good Practice Award" - Environmental protection Category, awarded by the Renewables-Grid-Initiative (RGI).

What's your parting shot?

Renewable energy cannot be 'green' if the associated infrastructure continues to kill birds and harm other biodiversity. Through coalitions such as the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) Energy Task force (ETF) and CLEANaction we are working with others and calling for the adequate integration of biodiversity protection in the energy sector. BirdLife invites collaborations to ensure a win-win for both energy and nature.

GIVING COMMUNITIES A NEW LEASE OF LIFE IN MALAWI



Women accessing water at one of the wells. © Yassin Rasheed

By Yassin Rasheed

In Malawi, BirdLife Partner, the Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi (WESM) is working with local communities across the country to advance conservation efforts in the country. A key element of this work is improving the lives of these communities through various interventions.

Covering 1800 square kilometers, Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve is the country's largest and oldest wildlife reserve in the country. After assuming management of Nkhotakota in 2015, African Parks constructed a fence to address human-wildlife conflict. As a result, communities relying on water from rivers inside the park faced water access challenges as they were unable to access the reserve. In some instances, communities would share these water sources with wildlife, further increasing the risks of waterborne diseases.

Consequently, Wildlife & Environmental Society of Malawi (WESM) in collaboration with Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve Association (NAWIRA), African Parks Nkhotakota Office and Nkhotakota District Council with financial and technical support from Bridgit Water Foundation are implementing a five-year water supply project to communities around Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve to increase access to safe water in communities around the game reserve through drilling and rehabilitating nonfunctional boreholes.

After community mobilization and geophysical surveys, the project kickstarted with drilling of one borehole at Njoka village which is 40 kilometers from Nkhotakota district council.

"It has been long time we have been waiting to provide water to the surrounding communities and this is very pleased to see that communities will be able to access water from boreholes that we have provide" said Victor Mangochi who is WESM Dwangwa Branch chair.

A key aspect of this project is engaging the communities through Community Water Point Committees. Each committee has 10 individuals who have been trained to ensure that the boreholes are taken care of to ensure continuous supply of clean water. Women are also encouraged to take leadership roles in these committees.

"This is the first borehole drilled in our village. I am happy that my family can now drink water from our own village well. We are very grateful for this project." said Anna Tambala, a community member from Njoka village.

The water supply project has ensured access to clean water while reducing the risk of waterborne diseases. The project will be implemented over a five-year period, with WESM aiming to reach 500,000 people by the end of the project.

“Water is life hence it is a basic right for every to have access to good quality water. WESM will collaborating with our partners to reach this goal”, concluded Mangochi.

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Anna Tambala

Community member from Njoka village.



Women accessing water at one of the wells . © Yassin Rasheed

WORLD WETLANDS DAY CELEBRATED WITH ZAAIFONTEIN PRIMARY AND NAKEKELA NATURE HEROES



Where better to learn about how a wetland works? © Bonginkosi Ndaba

By Steven Segang

World Wetlands Day is celebrated annually on 2 February to raise awareness about wetlands and to mark the anniversary of the Convention on Wetlands, which was adopted by countries involved since 1971. The day is also important in increasing people's understanding of these critical ecosystems' functions, threats, and challenges faced globally. Threats to wetlands include drainage for agriculture, pollutions, alien plants, and overharvesting of materials. It is there important for everyone to get involved in addressing the challenges as it is directly affecting everyone. Wetlands provide us with ecosystem services like clean water, reducing floods, storing carbon and create eco-tourism opportunities.

We may sometimes take the rural communities for granted, who might not look like they know the ecological values of these wetlands. But being situated right next to these catchments, they interact with them most often, through directly fetching water from them, feeding their livestock and other livelihoods from them, and even harvesting materials and food from them.

Hence it is important to engage in wetland restoration programs and initiatives.

BirdLife South Africa's Ingula Project Assistant and local bird guide, Steven Segang, visited Zaaifontein Primary School neighbouring the Ingula Nature Reserve on the 2 February with the focus on grade four and five to celebrate World Wetlands Day at the school. Learners were engaged using posters, wetlands booklets and a practical demonstration to learn how the wetland functions. Learners also got opportunity to explore further by colouring in activity which they need to demonstrate life in a wetland habitat.

On 5 February, wetlands were further celebrated with the Nakekela Nature Heroes, a local environmental group managed by community bird guide Bonginkosi Ndaba in Van Reenen district. Steven Segang joined the group to help with the activities for the day. About 35 children participated on the day which included learners of all ages from Mphophomo Combined School and Van Reenen Public Primary School.

The day went well with exciting activities including a MiniSASS (a smaller version of the South African Scoring System for Wetland and River health), wetland walk, in-field learning experience, and demonstration of an eco-pyramid showing how living and non-living things depend on each other.

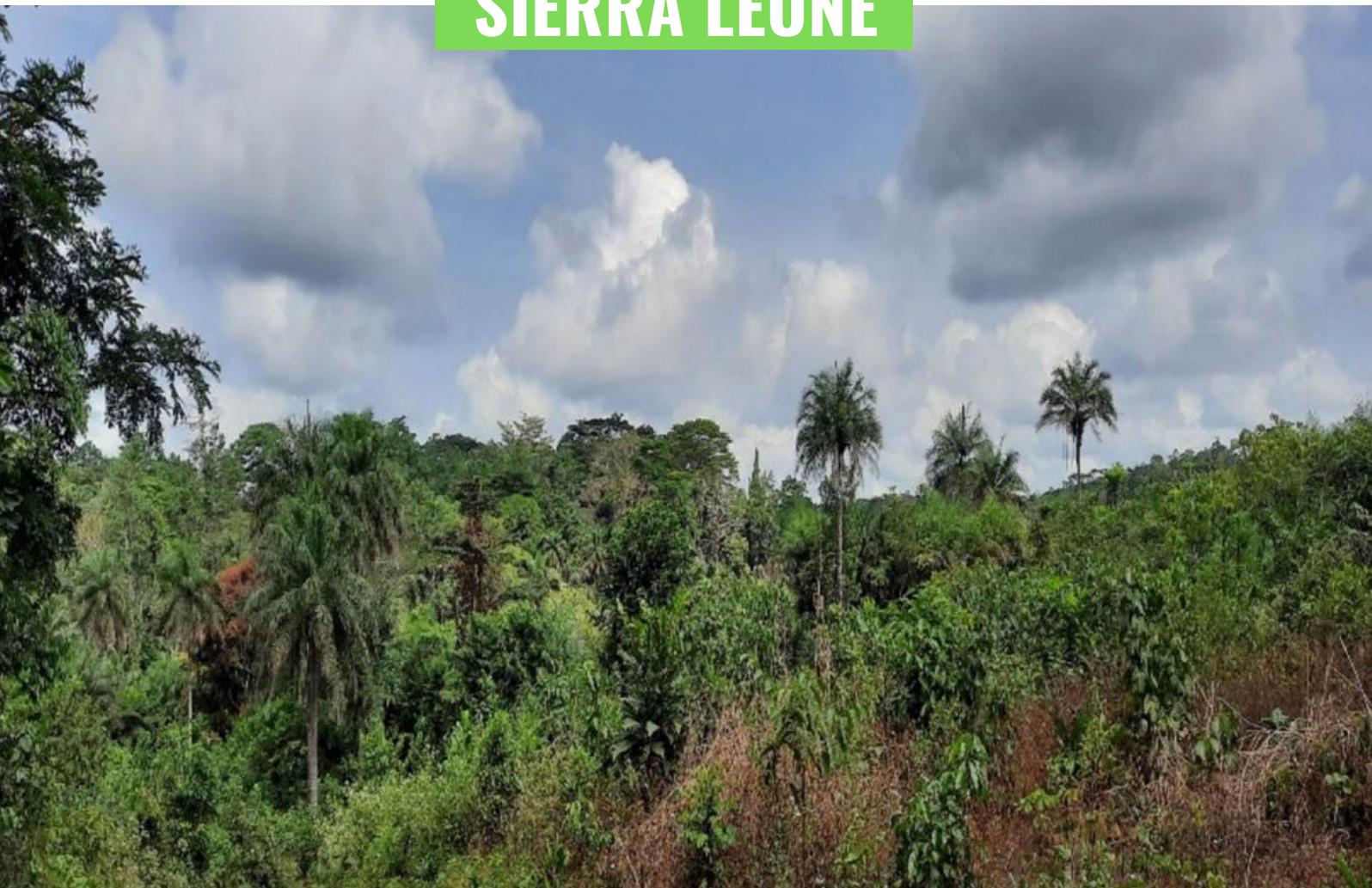
The last activity was on wetland food web where children played wetland species and interdependence among each other. It was a successful day with good interaction and discussion for the learners.

We look forward to continuing our engagement with these, and other schools and communities surrounding the Ingula Nature Reserve.



Steven shows learners and teachers how a wetland functions.
© Siphos Shabalala

PROTECTING THE KAMBUI AND GOLA RESERVES IN SIERRA LEONE



An aerial shot of the Gola landscape in Sierra Leone © Patrick Dauda

By Mambu James Kpargo

The Gola Rainforest National Park's satellite community forest landscape, including the Kambui Hills Forest Reserve, which covers an area of nearly 700 square kilometres, is the largest remains of the Upper Guinean Tropical Rainforest in Sierra Leone. The forest, which was under threat from poaching, logging, hunting, fishing, and farming, has high conservation value species, including the White-necked Picathartes, Pygmy Hippo, the Jentink's Duiker and the Western Chimpanzee suffered unprecedented anthropogenic activities that had negative impacts on the ecosystem, which, had the potential to degenerate the community forest landscape and exposed inhabitants to serious environmental consequences.

Kambui and Gola are part of the wider Gola Rainforest landscape in the region threatened by deforestation. Protecting this ecosystem is critical in preserving the integrity of the Gola Rainforest, which the Support Program for the Preservation of Forest Ecosystem in West Africa (PAPFor), funded by the European Commission, has been working to ensure.

A major challenge faced in protecting the forest was ensuring that local communities - the custodians of the forest, play a key role in conservation activities through community forestry.

Community forestry involves the participation and collaboration of various stakeholders, including community, government and non-governmental organizations. The level of involvement of each group depends on the specific community forest project and the management system in use.

In the Eastern Province of Sierra Leone, BirdLife partner, the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone (CSSL) has been working with six chiefdoms since 2021 to establish conservation zones. The governance structures, including Community Forest Co-Management Committees (CFMCs) have successfully been established in the targeted communities.

Separate Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed with the six chiefdoms to establish five conservation zones in the Gola Landscape and one in the Kambui Landscape. The forest reserve created are: Naiati in Barri Chiefdom, Gayayeyei in Gaura Chiefdom, Gidorma in Makpele, Mahungbeh in Tunkia, Lukweh in Barri, and Kambui in Nongowa.

However, the principal threats to the conservation areas, including logging, hunting, poaching and farming, were still evident and further actions were needed to save the ecosystem. The conservation areas lacked eco guards and forest monitors. There was fear of a resurgence of illegal activities due to the absence of a mechanism to patrol and monitor.



Forest monitoring activities being undertaken - © Patrick Dauda

To enhance effective and efficient management of the Kambui Hills Forest Reserve, 10 eco guards trained and supported by CSSL have been patrolling and bio monitoring the Protected Areas (PAs). Additionally, 14 forest monitors trained and supported by CSSL are patrolling the seven chiefdoms in the Gola landscape.

Trained in forest patrolling and biodiversity monitoring, the eco guards, who conduct regular patrols with rangers of the National Protected Area Authority (NPAA), collect data on wildlife and illegal human activities in the protected areas, and create awareness on the danger of destroying the ecosystem.

Deployment of eco guards enhances the efficiency of the protection and surveillance of the reserve. Further, it enhances the protection of the biodiversity and ecosystem of the landscape.

“The eco guards and forest monitors have been trained to undertake patrolling missions to support CSSL to detect and prevent threats to the protected areas such as hunting, mining and farming with the objective to keep the ecosystem from destruction. They also raise awareness about the danger of certain human activities to the ecosystem”. Dauda added.

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The only way to enhance sustainable biodiversity conservation is to ensure that community stakeholders take the lead in the process

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Patrick Dauda, CSSL Land Use Planning, Community Forestry and Co-Management Coordinator

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PROMOTING BIRDING IN ZAMBIA



Field workshop at Lazy J sanctuary © AndrewMbenjile

By Andrew Mbenjile

From the earliest days of BirdWatch Zambia, interest in birds has gone beyond studying and observing birds, but also to conservation and education. Since its establishment in 1969, BWZ has been at the forefront of conservation in Zambia by working with different stakeholders to promote the study, conservation and general interest in birds and their habitats in Zambia

The much-increased interest in Zambian birds and more people able to identify birds saw the launching of the Zambian Bird Atlas project in May 1976. The project aimed at getting more detailed information on the distribution of Zambian birds. Zambia currently boasts 788 birds gaining its status as one of the countries with high species concentrations on the African continent.

The first eBird/Merlin training was conducted on the 30th of November 2022, at the BWZ HQ in Lusaka, and in attendance were BWZ staff, University of Zambia (UNZA) students, and BWZ members. The BWZ HQ lecture was attended by 18 participants.

The second training was conducted on the 1st of December 2022 at the Livingstone International University for Tourism Excellence and Business Management (LIUTEBM), with a follow-up field workshop at Lazy J Ranch. In attendance were the LIUTEBM lecturers and wildlife management students. The LIUTEBM lecture was attended by 38 individuals.

Finally, the last training was conducted on the 3rd of December at Copperbelt University, with a follow-up field workshop at Chembe Bird Sanctuary.



Cullen Hanks from Cornell Lab of ornithology handing over field recorders to Daniel Phiri (BWZ National coordinator) © AndrewMbenjile

“Indeed, conservation is not a one-man show, we are thankful to BWZ and Cornell for giving us this opportunity to learn about birds and how we can contribute to conserving them”, noted Dr Vincent Nyirenda, Copperbelt University Senior Lecturer.

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology is a member-supported unit of Cornell University in Ithaca, New York USA, which studies birds and other wildlife.

Their mission is to interpret and conserve the Earth's biological diversity through research, education, and citizen science focused on birds.

eBird is an online database of bird observations providing scientists, researchers, and amateur naturalists with real-time data about bird distribution and abundance. eBird is an example of crowdsourcing and has been hailed as an example of democratizing science, treating citizens as scientists, and allowing the public to access and use their own data and the collective data generated by others. eBird is linked to Merlin Bird ID, a mobile app that uses machine learning and computer vision to identify bird species.

To upscale on the past efforts to get more detailed information on birds, BirdWatch Zambia in collaboration with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology successfully held the first-ever eBird/Merlin workshops for Zambia from November 30th - 3rd December 2022. The workshop brought together 88 participants and aimed at training individuals on using eBird and Merlin Apps to collect useful bird data, and also using these apps in various research-related activities such as species/habitat monitoring and publication of research papers. BWZ has a partnership with Cornell, and the partnership aims at supporting/improving data sharing in Zambia, building the capacity of local birders and tour guides, and upscale environmental education and awareness-raising efforts.

This is a critical long-term contribution to Zambia's fast-growing citizen science base.

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Our Collaboration with Cornell has been instrumental in advancing birding and citizen science in Zambia. We look forward to encouraging more people to participate in monitoring birds through the use of eBird and Merlin Bird ID App

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Daniel Phiri, BWZ National Coordinator.

The app was developed by Caltech and Cornell Tech computer vision researchers in partnership with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and bird enthusiasts and is available on Android and iOS devices.

“Our mission is to interpret and conserve the earth's biological diversity through research, education, and citizen science focused on birds”, said Ian Davies, eBird Project Leader.

The one week-long workshop provided a good platform for more discussions with the universities/research institutions on possible future collaborations in researching and conserving birds and other biodiversity and natural spaces.

Finally, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology also loaned two ZOOM F1 Field Recorders to BirdWatch Zambia, which will collect bird sounds for Zambian species. This will enable the improvement of the Zambian bird data, especially where bird sounds are concerned - currently, eBird/Merlin only covers 10% of Zambian bird species. The two sound recorders will enable the collection of more bird sounds for Zambian species.

AFRIEVOLVE CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE IN ACTION IN GHANA AND UGANDA



Some AfriEvolve beneficiaries constructing soil and water conservation structures © Ghana Wildlife Society

By Richard Appoh and Jacob Karuhura

The AfriEvolve project was conceived as a pan-African co-support platform to facilitate peer-to-peer learning exchanges and emulate south-south mentoring capacity building amongst participating partners. The project's activities contribute to gain organizational development skills and portfolio expertise on climate smart agriculture for improving civil society cooperation and smallholder farming resilience.

All six African NGOs work at the focal point between conservation in and around protected areas, and the needs for livelihoods of local people. In particular, land use of all kinds leads to increased pressure on wildlife, forests, water bodies and other habitats. The effects of climate change such as heavy rain falls, unexpected frost, extreme dry spells and erosion are exacerbating poor harvests and crop failures. This has in turn led to increased dependency on natural resources.

It is vital to ensure sustainable land use, putting impacts of climate change into consideration so that yields can be stabilized and livelihoods secured. Consequently, the six partner NGOs are introducing climate smart agriculture with local farmers at six selected pilot sites.

In November 2022, the Ghana Wildlife Society (BirdLife Partner) inaugurated and handed over a Climate Smart Agriculture Training Hub to the Chief and Executives of the Community Resource Management Area (CREMA) of Mognori, a farming community fringing the Mole National Park, located in northern Ghana.

The hub is a fenced garden equipped with a borehole, solar powered-pump, overhead tank with stand, and a drip irrigation system. The hub will be used by the women group in Mognori to cultivate dry season vegetables to supplement their household consumption and incomes, and serve as the venue for all AfriEvolve climate smart agriculture trainings.



Practical demonstration of growing climbing beans (a commonly grown crop in the landscape) under the CSA technology with the Biraara Batwa © Ghana Wildlife Society



AfriEvolue Coordinator, Assistant Manager of Mole National Park, Executive Director of GWS and The President of SOS Forests in a pose with the Chief of Mognori © Ghana Wildlife Society

In his welcome address, the Assistant Park Manager of the Mole National Park, Mr. Bona Kyiire said, the cordial relationship between the Mole National Park and the Mognori community is yielding a lot of fruits as evidenced by the number of NGOs supporting the community. He thanked the Ghana Wildlife Society, NABU and BMZ for implementing such an initiative aimed at improving the livelihoods of women in the catchment of the Mole National Park.

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This facility is intended to support the livelihoods of the women to improve food security and reduce poverty. Mognori community is considered for such projects because of their continuous support of the park in the area of wildlife protection through the CREMA

David Guba Kpelle

Executive Director of the Ghana Wildlife Society

He explained that the CREMA concept was initiated by the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission to encourage communities bordering protected areas to manage and sustainably utilize wildlife resources within a defined area through a community participatory approach and commended the CREMA executives for their effort.

The event was witnessed by the Chief of Mognori, the Tindanaa and people of the Mognori community. It also coincided with the AfriEvolue Peer-to-Peer visit to Ghana with representative of NABU (Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union) SOS-Forêts, NATURAMA, and BirdLife in attendance.

The inauguration and handing over was followed with training on how to operate and maintain the facility, which was organized for the leadership of the Mognori Women Group and some selected CREMA members in December 2022. The participants, including nine women and six men were taken through sessions on improving group dynamics and record keeping; operation of solar-powered irrigation system; efficient water delivery and distribution in a drip irrigation system; and basic maintenance of solar-powered irrigation systems.

In Uganda, NatureUganda through the AfriEvolue project is directly supporting 500 farmers, in 5 Community Forest Management Associations (CFMA) and their families to benefit from climate smart agriculture interventions. The interventions are aimed at climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as productivity increase in the communities fringing the Echuya Forest Reserve. The Echuya Forest Reserve is a highland forest area with an altitude of about 2,570 m in the Albertine Rift in western Uganda. It covers an area of about 4,000 ha and is located in one of the most densely populated and poorest agricultural regions of Uganda. The forest is facing threats from the ever-increasing rural population that depends entirely on natural resources and forest products for their basic livelihood needs such as firewood, bamboo for construction, and medical plants among others.

NatureUganda aims to reduce this over dependence by supporting the fringe communities of the forest reserve through climate smart interventions such as: training and equipping them with tools such as hoes and pick axes to construct soil and water conservation structures;

planting of trees to stabilize the constructed soil and water conservation structures and also serve as alternative source of fuel-wood; and giving out modern beehives for honey production and its value addition as an alternative source of income for the communities and also conserve bees that are very essential for crop pollination.

NatureUganda is also making and providing energy-saving stoves to help reduce pressure on the forest for fuelwood; giving out animals such as sheep and goat to help provide organic manure to improve crop production within the land scape; and conducting awareness campaigns on climate change and climate smart agriculture.

The AfriEvolve project emphasizes the transfer of knowledge and skills. Trained farmers are encouraged to share acquired knowledge with fellow farmers as trainer-of-trainers (ToTs). AfriEvolve also offers a regular open-to-public online capacity building program on climate smart agriculture, organizational development and nature conservation. Please connect to the Hatch platform to find detailed information about each of the events.

Expressing his joy, the Chairperson of Birara Batwa Community-Bukimbiri subcounty Kisoro District, Sembagare Francis said, "The implementation of AfriEvolve project has hinted on the biggest challenge that we the Batwa have always had of improving our yield since we have very small/no plots to grow more crops. I see every mutwa involved in crop growing using the organic manure from sheep from sheep which I had not seen before. Having got this sheep therefore, we believe food production in my fellow Batwa will increase as well as household income."



Project beneficiaries do joint work © NatureUganda

“

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.....
Sembagare Francis
Chairperson of Birara Batwa Community, Bukimbiri
subcounty Kisoro District



Distribution of 60 sheep to 60 households of the Birara Batwa Community in Bukimbiri Kisoro District with the purpose of providing organic manure for CSA © NatureUganda

MAURITIUS HOLDS AFRICAN-EURASIAN MIGRATORY WATERBIRD AGREEMENT (AEWA) TRAINING WORKSHOP



Group session at the AEWA workshop © MWF

By Liliana Meunier and Aurelie Henshaw

The Mascarenes (Mauritius, Rodrigues and Reunion) are part of the African-Eurasian Flyway, the terminus for thousands of overwintering birds annually that include Whimbrels (*Numenius phaeopus*), Common Greenshanks (*Tringa nebularia*), Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*), Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*), Ruddy Turnstones (*Arenaria interpres*) and Greater Sand Plover (*Charadrius leschenaultii*) amongst the twenty or so regular visitors.

The Republic of Mauritius became signatory of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) in 2002. The AEWA convention is an intergovernmental treaty dedicated to the conservation of migratory waterbirds and their habitats across Africa, Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia, Greenland and the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. Developed under the framework of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and administered by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), AEWA brings together countries and the wider international conservation community in an effort to establish coordinated conservation and management of migratory waterbirds throughout their entire migratory range.

From 6-10 February 2023, the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement regional Training of Trainers Workshop for Western Indian Ocean islands was held in Mauritius. The training coincided with the World Wetlands Day celebrations held every year in February to raise global awareness on the value of wetlands for humanity and the planet.



Presentation during the AEWA workshop © MWF

Co-organized by the AEWA Secretariat, National Parks and Conservation Service of Mauritius, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Convention on Migratory Species (UNEP/CMS) Secretariat and the RAMSAR Convention on Wetlands Secretariat, the workshop brought together 29 participants from Comoros, La Réunion, Madagascar, Mauritius and Rodrigues, Mayotte, and Seychelles. Three Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (MWF), staff also took part in the workshop.

Launched by the Hon. Maneesh Gobin, Attorney General and Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security of Mauritius, the training was aimed at enhancing understanding of conservation and sustainable use of waterbirds and wetlands, using the Flyway approach. Flyways are geographic routes used by migratory birds between breeding and non-breeding areas.



People at an undertaken activity © MWF

The workshop comprised a series of practical training modules on wetland and migratory waterbird conservation, activities and games which could be taken and adapted to different audiences from different countries. Additionally, there were also several field trips to Ile aux Aigrettes, Ile aux Fouquets (au Phare) and Ile de la Passe, and the three Ramsar sites of Mauritius: Rivulet Terre Rouge Estuary Bird Sanctuary, Blue Bay Marine Park and Pointe d'Esny. MWF has been actively restoring the ecosystems of these islets, implementing conservation education and has been involved in some of these Ramsar sites.

The workshop also aimed to promote networking between groups and technical experts linked to waterbirds and wetlands in the southwestern Indian Ocean. This was done through group activities aimed at promoting interactions between the different groups, and exploring potential areas for collaboration and knowledge sharing in the future. Additionally, the activities emphasized the need for shared efforts to ensure effective conservation of migratory species moving between the different countries of the Indian Ocean.

“

The training was a great opportunity to meet other conservationists working in the region for knowledge sharing and also for potential future collaboration. The group activities and games were very engaging and will be very useful for us as trainers teaching the flyway approach

.....
Aurelie Henshaw, Head of Training at MWF

“As a participant of the AEWA workshop, I can say that the workshop helped me to get to know and meet people at all professional levels and led to the exchange of ideas and new information”, said trainee Liliana Meunier, Environment Educator at MWF Rodrigues.

During the visit to Ile aux Aigrettes, MWF showcased its seabird attraction project whose purpose was to restore the seabird community once present on the island, and the ecosystems restoration program. The aim of the project is to attract native seabirds such as Wedge-tailed Shearwaters (*Ardenna pacifica*), Red-tailed Tropicbird (*Phaethon rubricauda*), White-tailed Tropicbirds (*Phaethon lepturus*), Sooty Terns (*Onychoprion fuscatus*), Common Noddies (*Anous stolidus*) and Lesser Noddies (*Anous tenuirostris*) back on the island.

“We would like to thank all our partners including the National Parks and Conservation Service, AEWA, Ramsar Secretariat, and the supporters of some of the work on Ile aux Aigrettes - Nairobi Convention's Strategic Action Programme for the protection of the Western Indian Ocean from land-based sources and activities (WIOSAP) and Mitsui O.S.K. Lines (MOL) Mauritius International Fund for Natural Environment Recovery and Sustainability for their support”, concluded Henshaw.



Support our partner in Malawi!

Donate to support the Wildlife and Environmental Society of Malawi (WESM) following the devastating Cyclone Freddy in March 2023 which has led to devastating floods, mudslides, deaths, injured and people missing

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