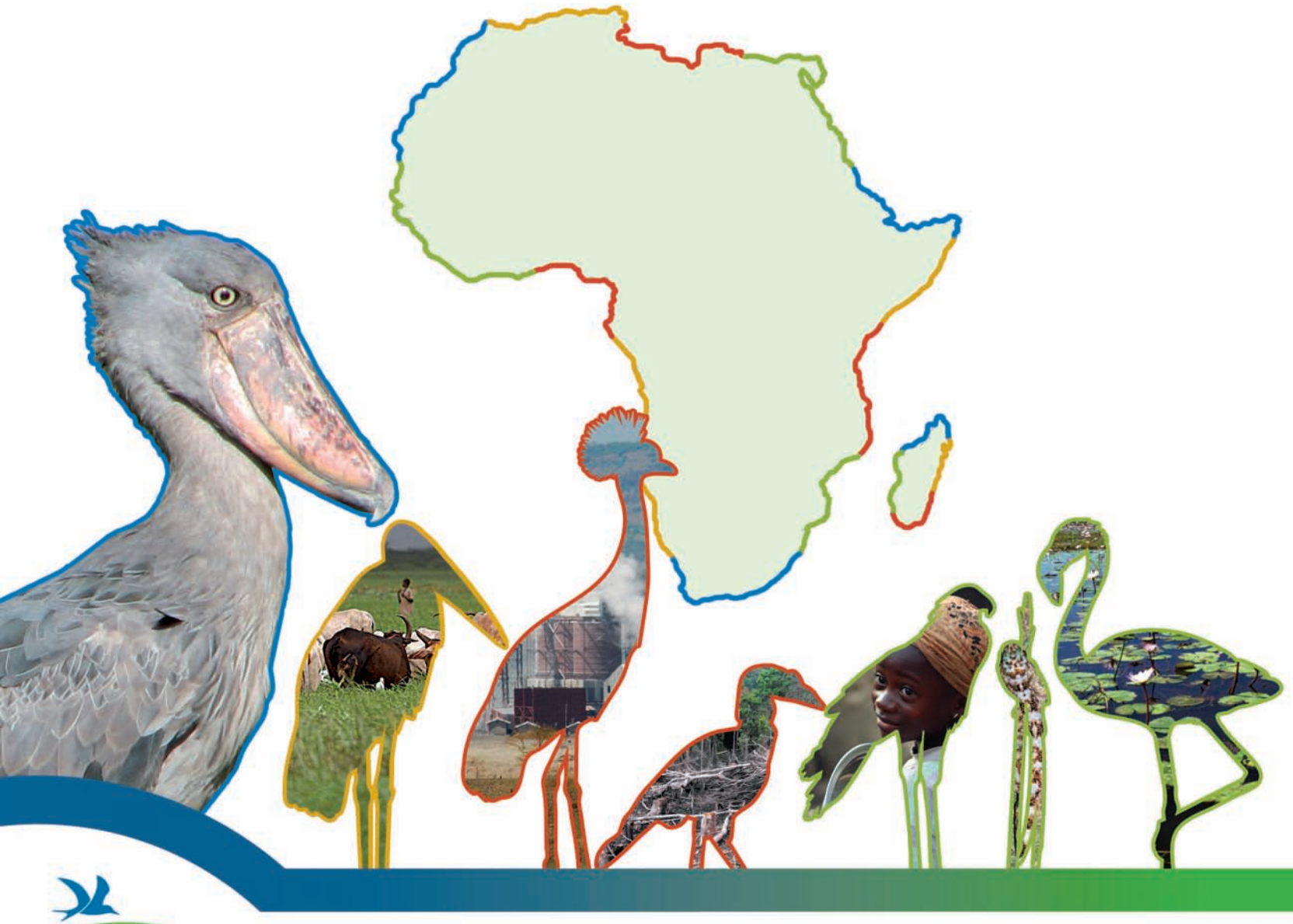
STATE OF AFRICA'S BIRDS

Outlook for our changing environment



BirdLife INTERNATIONAL

Partnership for nature and people

An assessment by the BirdLife Africa Partnership

Biodiversity underpins our lives

Africa is rich in its variety of living things, together referred to as biodiversity. Biodiversity is fundamental to human wellbeing: it offers multiple opportunities for development and improving livelihoods. It is the basis for essential environmental services upon which life on earth depends. Thus, its conservation and sustainable use are of critical importance.

Foreword

In 2009, BirdLife Botswana, the BirdLife Partner in Botswana, working with the Government of Botswana, established a Bird Population Monitoring (BPM) Programme. The BPM Programme is part of the global Wild Bird Index effort, which uses information on birds to assess the overall condition of ecosystems and the environment on which we all depend. These trends will be used to set conservation priorities, report on biodiversity changes (including the response of fauna and flora to climate change), as well as serve as useful inputs to State Of the Environment Reports and national reports to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Currently there are over 350 volunteers supporting the programme who regularly monitor 241 transects spread throughout the country. My Government has been particularly supportive of the BPM Programme because it, among other things, bolsters the participation of rural communities in natural resources management. Additionally, analysis of bird data will influence environmental policies and their implementation (e.g. game bird hunting quotas, and the control of the Red-billed Quelea), land-use planning and tourism development. The science of using bird information by the BirdLife Global Partnership to inform policies has far reaching impacts from local to global level.

It is this scalability of the project, and potential continental and global use of the data, which has particularly impressed me. I therefore support the *State of Africa's birds* report, compiled by the BirdLife Africa Partnership, which collates experiences from across Africa, on how the continent's birds are doing. The report provides a comprehensive overview of the current and emerging environmental issues in Africa, and presents clearly a synthesis of the work and knowledge of the BirdLife Africa Partnership in conserving birds, their habitats and other forms of biodiversity, especially efforts channelled towards working with communities for sustainable use of natural resources.

The report presents challenges and opportunities to biodiversity conservation, and highlights the problem of human induced habitat degradation which can lead to an increased risk of extinction of some species of birds and impact human livelihoods. It showcases the conservation activities of the BirdLife Africa Partnership and provides an outlook for Africa's bird conservation. It also points out the need to mainstream biodiversity in regional and international policy and planning processes.

I would like to encourage other African Governments to adopt and promote the use of birds as environmental indicators. Certainly we will continue working with BirdLife Botswana to ensure birds and their habitats are conserved, whilst increasing the socio-economic contributions that birds make to improving rural livelihoods. Happy reading!

Lieutenant General Seretse Khama Ian Khama, President, Republic of Botswana

About this report

State of Africa's birds presents a summary of the data and information collected by the BirdLife Africa Partnership. The report is organised into four main chapters: **INTRODUCTION**—why birds and biodiversity are important; **STATE**—what we know about birds and their changing state; **PRESSURE**—why birds are declining; and **RESPONSE**—what is being done to improve their status. Links are provided to the much more detailed information that can be found online at www.birdlife.org/datazone.

Birds help us understand our environment

Birds act as indicators of the health of our environment, alerting us when ecosystems are out of balance. They occur nearly everywhere, but due to differing ecological requirements, particular species are uniquely distributed. Knowledge of the occurrence of birds can be used to identify the places that are most important for the conservation of biodiversity.

Birds are valuable indicators for biodiversity

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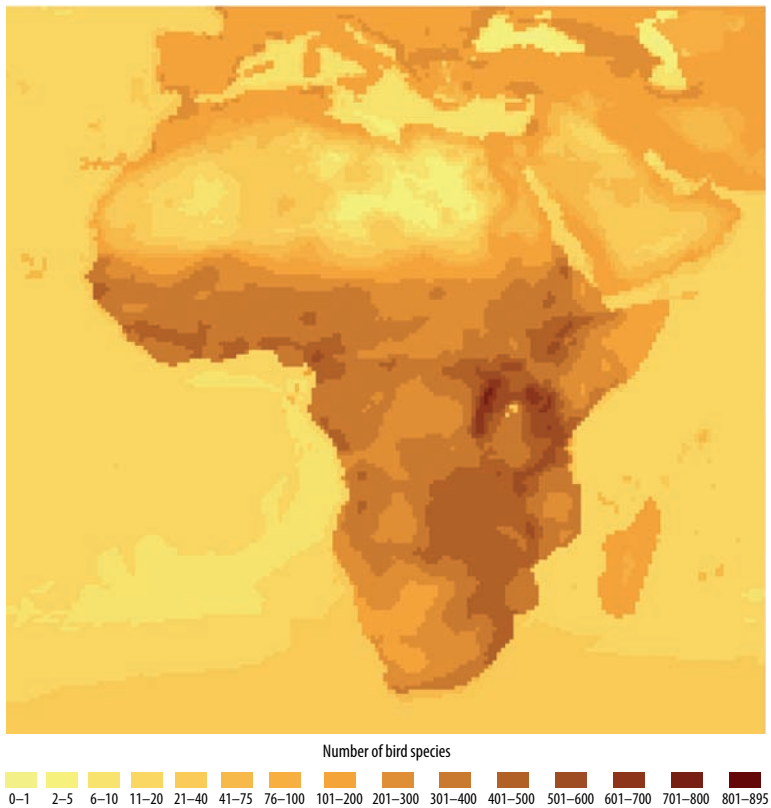
Africa is rich in birds, with 2,355 species recorded on the continent. Birds occur everywhere, from the lowest point (Lake Assal, 156 m below sea level) to the highest mountains (Mount Kilimanjaro, at nearly 5,900 m). People are passionate about birds; they are generally highly visible and as a result are well-studied, with huge amounts of information available on their biology and distribution. In turn, this helps us understand the wealth of other biodiversity. In general, places that are rich in bird species are also rich in other forms of biodiversity.

Birds also play an important role as indicators of the health of our environment because of their responsiveness to environmental changes. Within a variety of different ecosystems, birds often perform the function of top level predators, and if these species start to decline, this highlights wider problems within the food chain, enabling conservationists and governments to act. For instance, declines in certain seabird species have alerted conservationists to the fact that there are underlying problems with marine ecosystems, including reductions in fish populations and changes to plankton distributions. Some bird species also provide important ecosystem services in their own right. Vultures are an excellent example of this, performing an essential role of removing disease from the environment by consuming carrion.



Distribution of Africa's bird species: based on overlaying the breeding and wintering ranges of all species known to occur within the continent

SOURCE Analysis of BirdLife data (2013).

We value birds for many reasons

Birds are important to humans. They provide many supporting and regulating ecosystem services through their roles as predators, pollinators, scavengers, seed dispersers, seed predators, and ecosystem engineers. In Africa, birds are also greatly valued for their cultural importance. Feathers, for instance, have always been part of human self-adornment, symbolising status, wealth, vitality and ardour.

The socio-cultural importance of birds

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Across Africa, birds are well regarded in various cultures and lifestyles. They are the subjects of many proverbs, riddles, stories and songs. Tribal groups use colourful and extravagant plumes to decorate themselves. The Zulus (South Africa) once wore turaco feathers as headdresses. The King of Swaziland and traditional Maasai men in Kenya still wear feathers. In Cameroon, a porcupine quill and red flight feather from Bannerman's Turaco *Tauraco bannermani* in a man's black hat indicate his position as a traditional council member.

There is a special relationship between birds and many local communities in Sub-Saharan Africa. For example the Greater Honey guide *Indicator indicator* leads local people to active beehives. After successful harvesting of honey, a piece of the honeycomb is left as a reward for the bird. Large flocks of Black Kite *Milvus migrans* and Abdim's Stork *Ciconia abdimii* are used by farmers to predict the onset of dry and rainy seasons respectively. These two species also predate on large numbers of locusts during outbreaks in the Sahel, thus contributing to pest control.

SOURCE Whelan *et al.* (2008) *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1134: 25–60. Collar *et al.* (2007) *Birds and people: bonds in a timeless journey.* Mexico City: CEMEX.

Hamer tribe people from south-western Ethiopia dressed with feathers in a pre-wedding ceremony (PHOTO: Isabelle Le Ru).

Some sites are particularly important for birds and other wildlife

Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) are internationally recognized sites important for the conservation of birds. They are also sites of global significance for the conservation of biodiversity, often referred to as Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs).

In Africa, more than 1,230 IBAs have been identified on land and at sea

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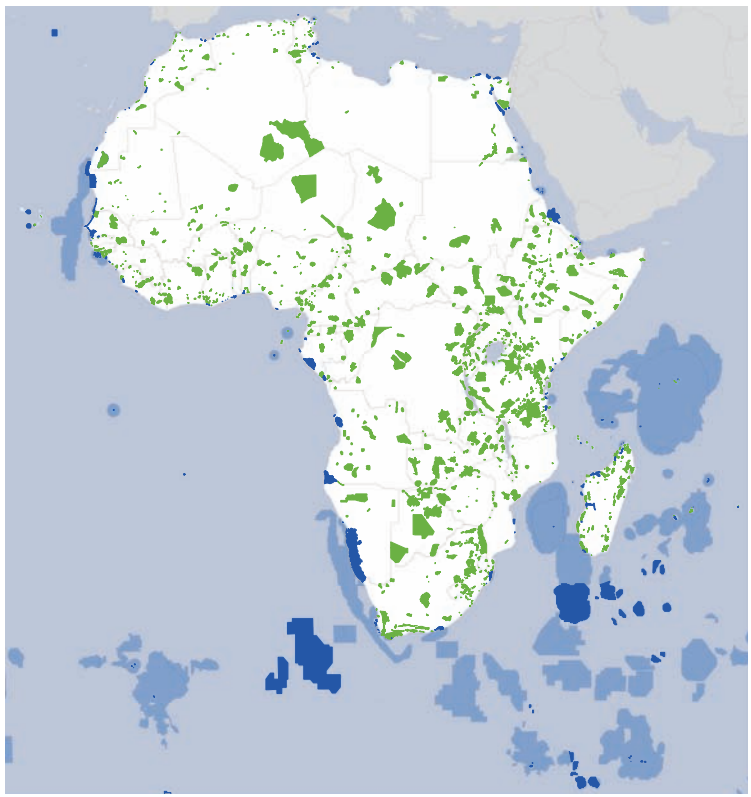
IBAs are identified using a set of standardized, globally applicable categories and criteria, covering different aspects of Vulnerability (globally threatened species) and Irreplaceability (restricted-range, biome-restricted and congregatory species). IBAs are also important for other taxonomic groups. For example, in East Africa, a network of 228 IBAs in Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda captures 90–97% of the total species diversity of endemic mammals, snakes and amphibians found in this region.

Tsavo West National Park, Kenya, provides a rich and diverse habitat for many species and also allows tourists to enjoy nature (PHOTO: FABIAN HAAS).



Location of IBAs in Africa

Key
- = Terrestrial IBA
- = Marine IBA (confirmed)
- = Marine IBA (proposed)

SOURCE IBA identification and map: Analysis of BirdLife data (2013). IBA coverage of other taxa: Brooks *et al.* (2001) *Ostrich suppl.* 15: 3–12.

Many bird species are close to extinction

One in ten of all African bird species is considered globally threatened with extinction because they have small and/or declining populations and/or ranges.

About 10% of all African bird species are considered globally threatened with extinction

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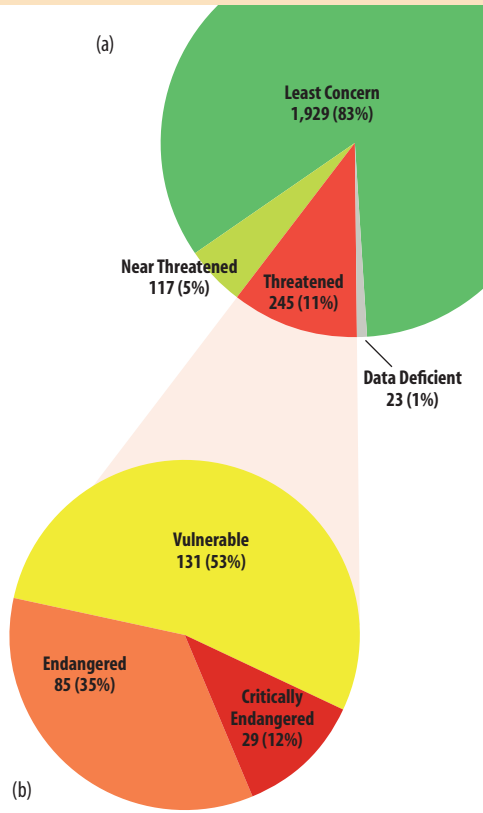
BirdLife classifies the extinction risk of all the world's birds using the categories and criteria of the IUCN Red List. BirdLife's 2012 assessment concluded that, of the 2,355 bird species in Africa, 245 are globally threatened with extinction because they have small and/or declining populations and/or ranges. Of these species, 29 are considered Critically Endangered meaning that they face an extremely high risk extinction in the wild.

The Critically Endangered Taita Apalis *Apalis fuscigularis* is thought to be restricted to four tiny fragments of forest (about 257 ha in total) in the Taita Hills, Kenya. It is not well researched due to its enigmatic behaviour, rarity and specialised habitat use (PHOTO: DRIES VAN DE LOOCK).



IUCN Red List status for (a) all birds in Africa, (b) globally threatened birds in Africa

SOURCE Analysis of BirdLife's data (2012).

Most threatened birds have small ranges

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Threatened bird species often have small ranges, making them susceptible to site specific threats. Eleven percent of birds in Africa qualify as globally threatened because their ranges are less than 20,000 km^2, fragmented and declining, or because they are restricted to a few locations. In south-east Kenya, two Critically Endangered birds, Taita Thrush *Turdus helleri* and Taita Apalis *Apalis fuscigularis* exemplify this, being confined to the Taita Hills IBA (c.400 ha), where the indigenous forest habitat has been reduced to tiny forest fragments. Surveys of Taita Apalis in 1996 and 2010 found the species in just four of these fragments, one as small as 1 ha and the largest being c.200 ha. Although the surrounding environment is unsuitable, it has been shown that these endemics still manage to move between patches, emphasizing the importance of maintaining corridors of natural vegetation between remaining forest fragments.

SOURCE Githiru and Borghesio (2010) Preventing extinctions: Critically Endangered species—Taita Apalis *Apalis fuscigularis* and Taita Thrush *Turdus helleri*. Final report: Biological Research. Nairobi: Nature Kenya.

More bird species are becoming threatened

More bird species in Africa are being up-listed to higher categories of threat than are being down-listed to lower categories. This indicates that more species are slipping closer to extinction.

The status of Africa's birds is deteriorating

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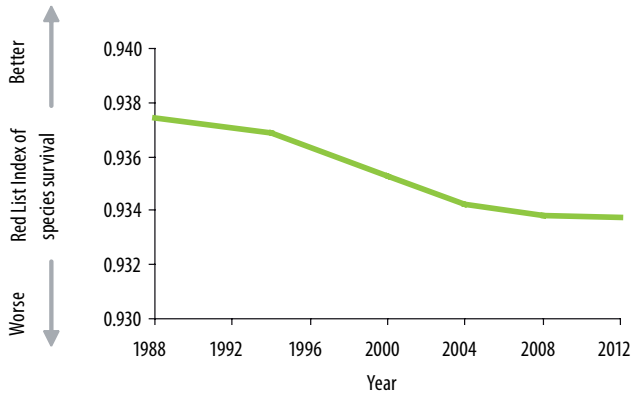
Between 2005 and 2012, 25 species in Africa were up-listed to higher categories of threat in the IUCN Red List. Yet, only seven species were down-listed to lower threat categories. Among those placed in higher threat categories are emblematic species such as Bateleur *Terathopius ecaudatus*, Martial Eagle *Polemaetus bellicosus* and several species of vultures. Of 11 vulture species found in Africa, seven (including five of the six species endemic to Africa) are listed as globally threatened. Worryingly five of these species joined the Red List of threatened species only in the last seven years. For instance, Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus*, a species that has historically been widespread in Africa, was listed as Endangered in 2011.



The Red List Index for Africa's birds, 1988–2012

SOURCE Analysis of BirdLife's data (2012).

Hooded Vulture *Necrosyrtes monachus* and Cape Vulture *Gyps coprotheres*, Etosha National Park in north-western Namibia. Over the last few decades, there has been an alarming decline in vulture populations in Africa due to varying threats. These include habitat loss and degradation, food scarcity, misuse of chemicals, trade in vulture parts for traditional medicine and direct persecution (PHOTO: SMELLME/DREAMSTIME.COM).

Many common bird species are declining

Many common birds in Africa are declining in a variety of habitats such as farmlands, forests and wetlands, alerting us to wider environmental problems.

Afro-Palearctic migrants are declining

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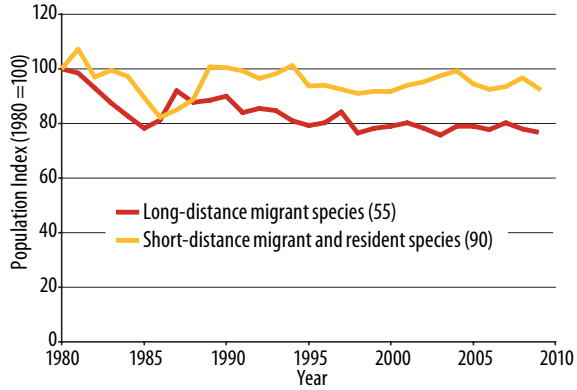
Trends observed from long term studies of migrants in Europe show that long-distance Afro-Palearctic migratory birds are declining faster than short-distance migrants and residents. This implies that conditions for widespread species in Africa are also deteriorating, with declines likely to be occurring even for resident species. To assess this worrying situation, national bird population monitoring schemes have been initiated in four countries involving BirdLife Africa Partners (in Botswana, Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda) to develop a Wild Bird Index that will measure average population trends in the future.



Population trends of birds that migrate between Europe and Africa

SOURCE © Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring Scheme (PECBMS): European Bird Census Council/RSPB/BirdLife International/Statistics, Netherlands

Many Afro-Palearctic migrant birds, such as Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur* and Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*, have undergone a dramatic decline in numbers in recent years (PHOTOS: David Tipling, Steve Garvie/Flickr).

Many IBAs are in an unfavourable state

Conserving IBAs would make an enormous contribution towards maintaining not just birds but much other biodiversity. However, many IBAs are in a poor state and subject to high pressures.

Many African IBAs have no legal recognition or protection

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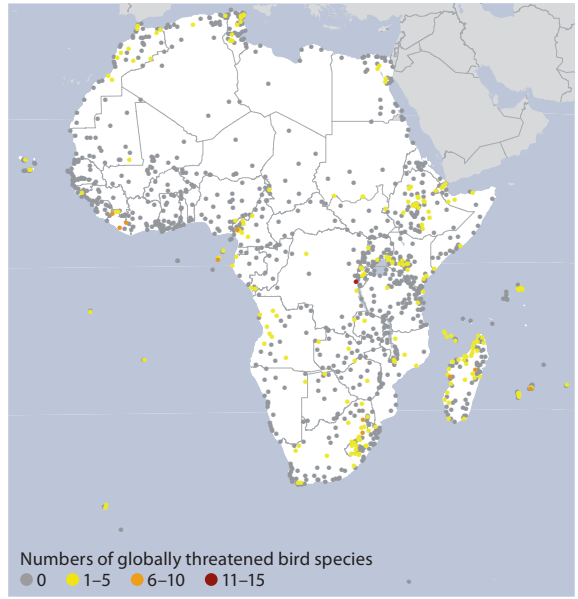
Only 749 (60%) out of 1,230 IBAs in Africa have some form of protection, either wholly or partially. The rest are unprotected in spite of their significance for birds and biodiversity more generally. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) calls for the expansion of the global protected area network to at least 17% of terrestrial and inland water, and 10% of coastal and marine areas, especially sites of biodiversity importance, to improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity (CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020, Aichi Target 11). IBAs are justifiable sites that countries can consider to include when expanding their protected area networks.

African IBAs with little or no protection



SOURCE Analysis of BirdLife data (2013).

Many African IBAs are in danger of losing their natural habitats and key biodiversity

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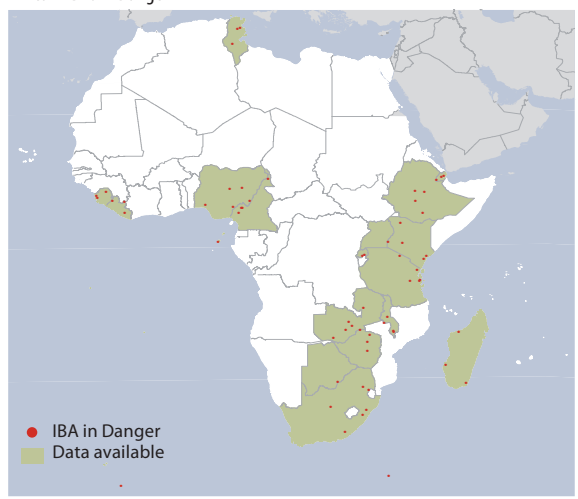
IBAs are monitored by BirdLife Africa Partners revealing that many are in a poor state, with some seriously affected by damaging developments. As part of a global BirdLife initiative called 'IBAs in Danger', an analysis of pressures on IBAs provided in early 2013 by BirdLife Africa Partners has identified an initial list of 75 IBAs at extreme risk of losing their biodiversity value. The list will be used to target enhanced conservation effort for these sites, through advocacy, campaigning and local action.

African 'IBAs in Danger'



SOURCE Analysis of BirdLife data (2013).

Human actions are putting pressure on species, sites and habitats

In Africa, as throughout the world, birds are threatened by a variety of threats, the most significant being habitat fragmentation, degradation and destruction as well as direct impacts, including hunting and trapping.

Multiple threats are driving threatened birds towards extinction

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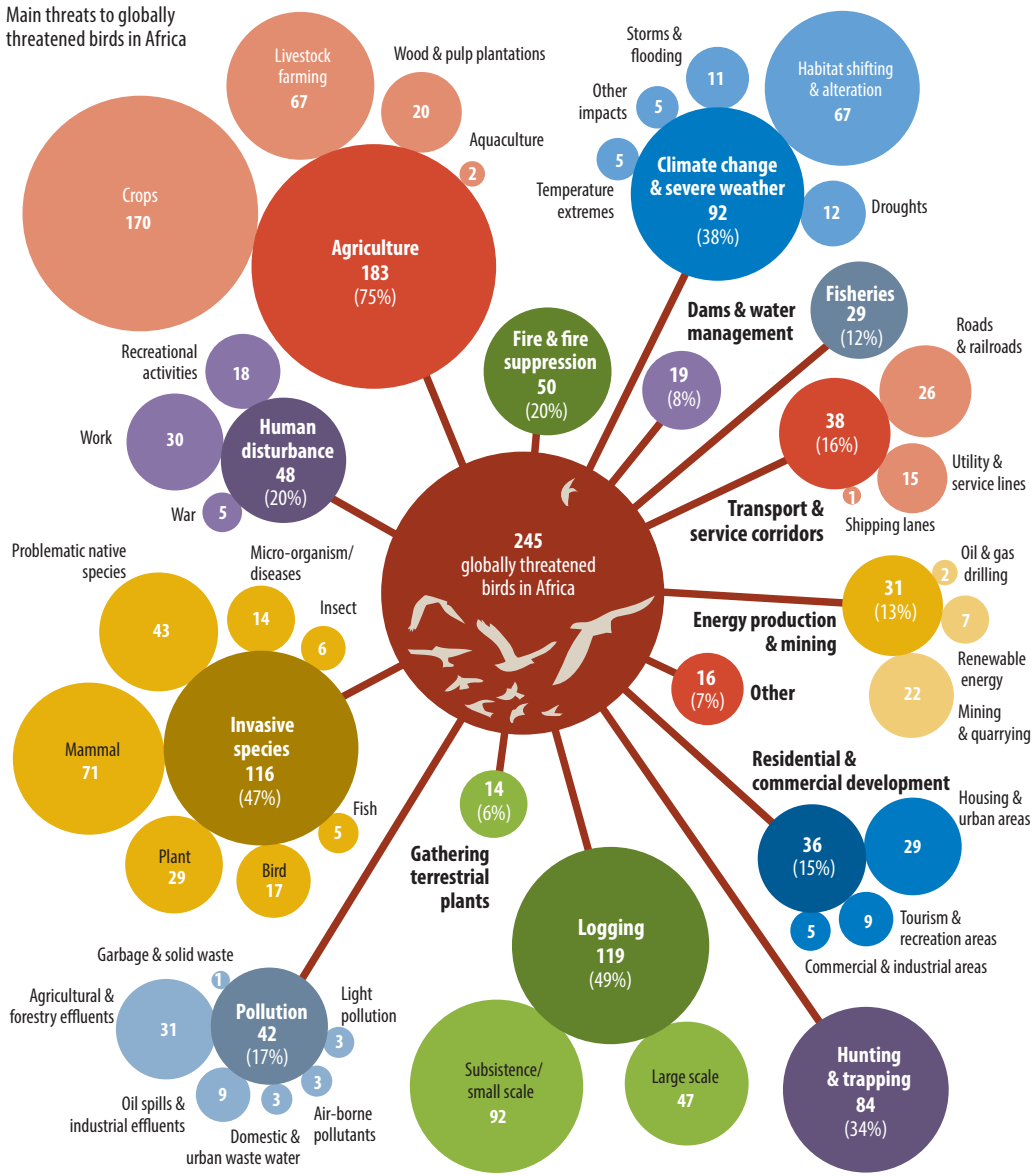
The threats leading to population declines in birds in Africa are many and varied, and mirror those impacting bird species worldwide. BirdLife is responsible for collating, maintaining and evaluating the threats faced by the world's threatened bird species, as part of its work on assessing their extinction risk for the IUCN Red List. The figure shows the number of globally threatened birds in Africa affected by different threats—many species are affected by more than one threat.



SOURCE Analysis of BirdLife data (2013).

Unsustainable agricultural practices are the greatest threats to bird species

The introduction of agriculture is one of the most important achievements of human development, yet it also poses a high risk to birds and the environment more generally. Agriculture is considered a threat to three-quarters of Africa's threatened bird species.

Crop expansion is a major threat to biodiversity in tropical countries

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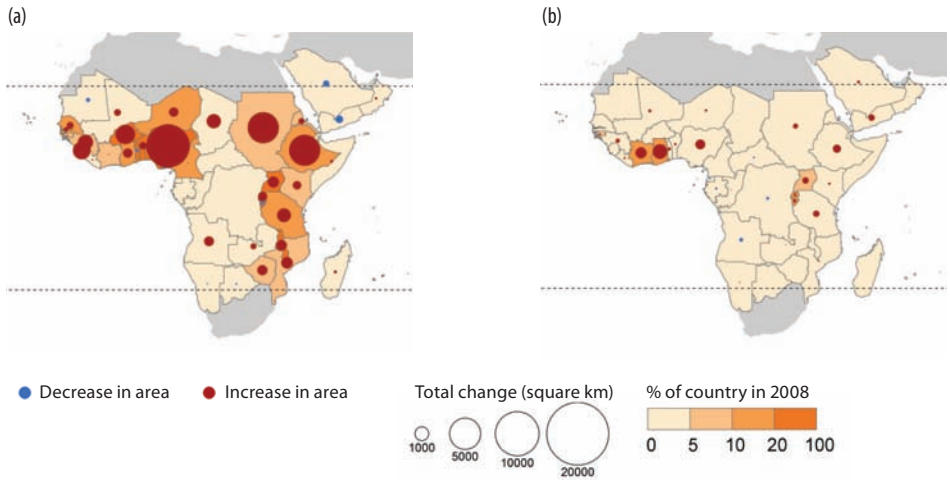
In recent decades, increases in cropland have been particularly marked in the tropics. In Africa, countries which have added the greatest area of new cropland are Nigeria, Ethiopia and Sudan. Places that were once thought to be relatively safe from conversion are now increasingly at risk, including some priority areas for biodiversity conservation, such as the forests of Central Africa and the savanna woodlands of the Sahel and East Africa. Agricultural expansion thus poses a grave threat to a wide range of bird species and other biodiversity. Understanding the nature of such expansion is critical to understanding the threats it poses to biodiversity and to developing appropriate conservation responses.

Change in the area devoted to cropland in tropical African countries 1999–2008 for (a) annual crops, (b) perennial crops

SOURCE Phalan *et al.* (2013) *PLoS ONE* 8(1): e51579.



Tea plantations around Mt Kenya are monocultures with little diversity (PHOTO: FABIAN HAAS).

Forest loss is one of the major threats to biodiversity

Forest is the most important habitat for over half of bird species in Africa. However, forests are subject to diverse threats leading to their loss and/or degradation. Forests provide a range of life essential services, including water purification and provisioning, enrichment of soil nutrient, carbon cycling and storage and so on. The loss of forests therefore has direct implications for people too.

Deforestation in the Mau Forest, Kenya, is impacting wildlife and people

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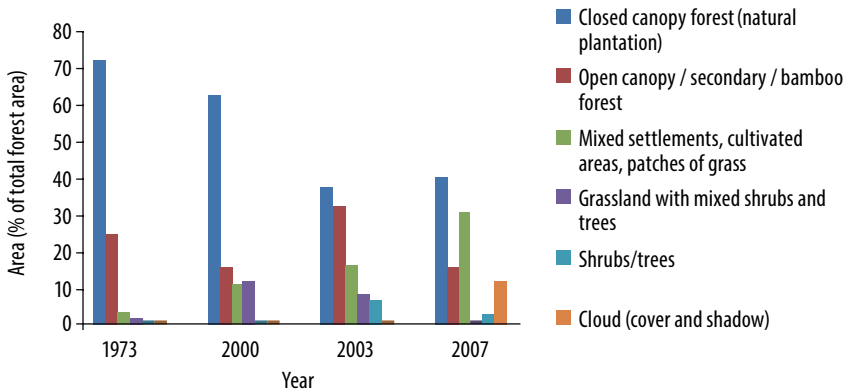
The Mau Forests Complex (MFC) forms the largest closed-canopy forest ecosystem in Kenya and is the most important water catchment in the Kenyan Rift Valley and Western Kenya. Its 22 forest blocks comprise an area of about 417,000 hectares and it has been identified as an IBA because of its rich highland bird communities. Recent investigations show that the MFC has been affected by widespread unplanned settlements, irregular forest land allocation, encroachments and illegal extraction of forest resources. Specifically, excisions (degazettement) of forest reserves and continuous widespread encroachment have destroyed approximately a quarter of the MFC over the last 15 years. In addition, sections of the MFC have been impacted by forest plantations (10% of Mau forest), subsistence and cash crop farming and unregulated logging concessions. Scientists predict that further destruction of the MFC will cause an environmental disaster in Kenya, including greater reductions of river flows and lake levels.

Land cover change in the Mau Forest Complex, 1973–2007



SOURCE Eshiamwata (2012) Monitoring habitats at Key Biodiversity Sites in Africa using remote sensing: land cover change at Important Bird Areas in Eastern Africa. University of Nairobi (PhD thesis). National Museums of Kenya Biodiversity Team (2009) Report submitted to the Prime Minister's Task Force on the Conservation of the Mau Forest Complex.

The Mau Forest Complex, one of Kenya's most important water catchments, is severely threatened by unsustainable exploitation such as forest clearing for charcoal production (PHOTO: KENYA FOREST WORKING GROUP).

Infrastructure development can have negative effects on birds

Poorly planned infrastructure development is a key driver of habitat destruction and a major threat to biodiversity. Development projects are listed among threats to over one-third of globally threatened bird species in Africa and one-quarter of Africa's IBAs.

Wind Farms in Lesotho could threaten local vulture populations

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Cape Vulture *Gyps coprotheres* (PHOTO: FRANCESCO VERONESI).

Wind farms and renewable energy programmes are good for the environment and are encouraged. However, poorly located wind farms can have significant negative impacts on birds, through loss of habitat, disturbance and in particular mortality through collisions with the turbine blades. Large, soaring birds including vultures are particularly prone to colliding with wind turbines. Conservationists are concerned that proposed wind farms in the Lesotho Highlands, a critical habitat for declining populations of Lammergeier (Bearded Vulture) *Gypaetus barbetus* and Cape Vulture *Gyps coprotheres*, could cause local species extinction. Careful planning is required to locate wind farms in areas with minimal impact on birds and other wildlife.

SOURCE Drewitt and Langston (2006) *Ibis 148:* 29–42.

Lammergeier *Gypaetus barbetus* (PHOTO: DAVID TIPLING).

Pollution remains a serious concern

Environmental pollution, including air, water or soil, has negative direct and indirect impacts on birds and other biodiversity. More than one-fifth of threatened birds in Africa are affected by pollution, including from agriculture, forestry and industrial effluents.

Oil spills reduce populations of seabirds and are costly to clean up

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Cleaning oiled penguins in South Africa (PHOTO: SANCCOB).

Marine oil spills can kill large numbers of seabirds and have the potential to completely wipe out small or localised populations. The population of the Endangered African Penguin *Spheniscus demersus*, which breeds in Namibia and South Africa, fell by around 90% during the 20th century to c.26,000 pairs in 2009. The decline was largely attributed to food shortages resulting from large catches of fish by commercial fisheries and environmental fluctuations.

Mortality from oil spills poses a further serious threat to African Penguin, with more than 80% of its population breeding within 100 km of Cape Town, and the world's largest oil-shipping route lying offshore. Two individual oil spills (in 1994 and 2000) killed 30,000 individuals, despite rehabilitation programmes, while surviving birds suffered poor reproductive success.

Another penguin affected by oil pollution is the Endangered Northern Rockhopper Penguin *Eudyptes moseleyi*, the majority of which breed on the Tristan da Cunha group and Gough Island. This species has declined by over 90% since 1950 to c.265,000 breeding pairs, with the cause of decline unknown but likely to include changes in sea temperature, incidental capture in fisheries, and introduced predators. It was further threatened on 16 March 2011 when a freighter ran aground on Nightingale Island, spilling 800 tonnes of heavy crude oil into the ocean. A major rescue effort followed and involved the attempted rehabilitation of over 3,500 birds, but the long-term impact on the species remains unknown.

SOURCE BirdLife Species Fact Sheets at www.birdlife.org/datazone.

Oiled Northern Rockhopper Penguin *Eudyptes moseleyi*, Tristan da Cunha (PHOTO: TREVOR GLASS).

Overexploitation affects many bird species

Harvesting of natural products for food, medicine, fuel and construction supports the livelihoods of many rural people in Africa. However, harvesting can exceed the capacity of the products to regenerate and lead to the complete destruction of those resources. Unsustainable harvesting for food, sport and trapping for the cage-bird trade affects more than one-third of Africa's threatened bird species.

Trade in Africa's Grey and Timneh Parrots is currently not sustainable

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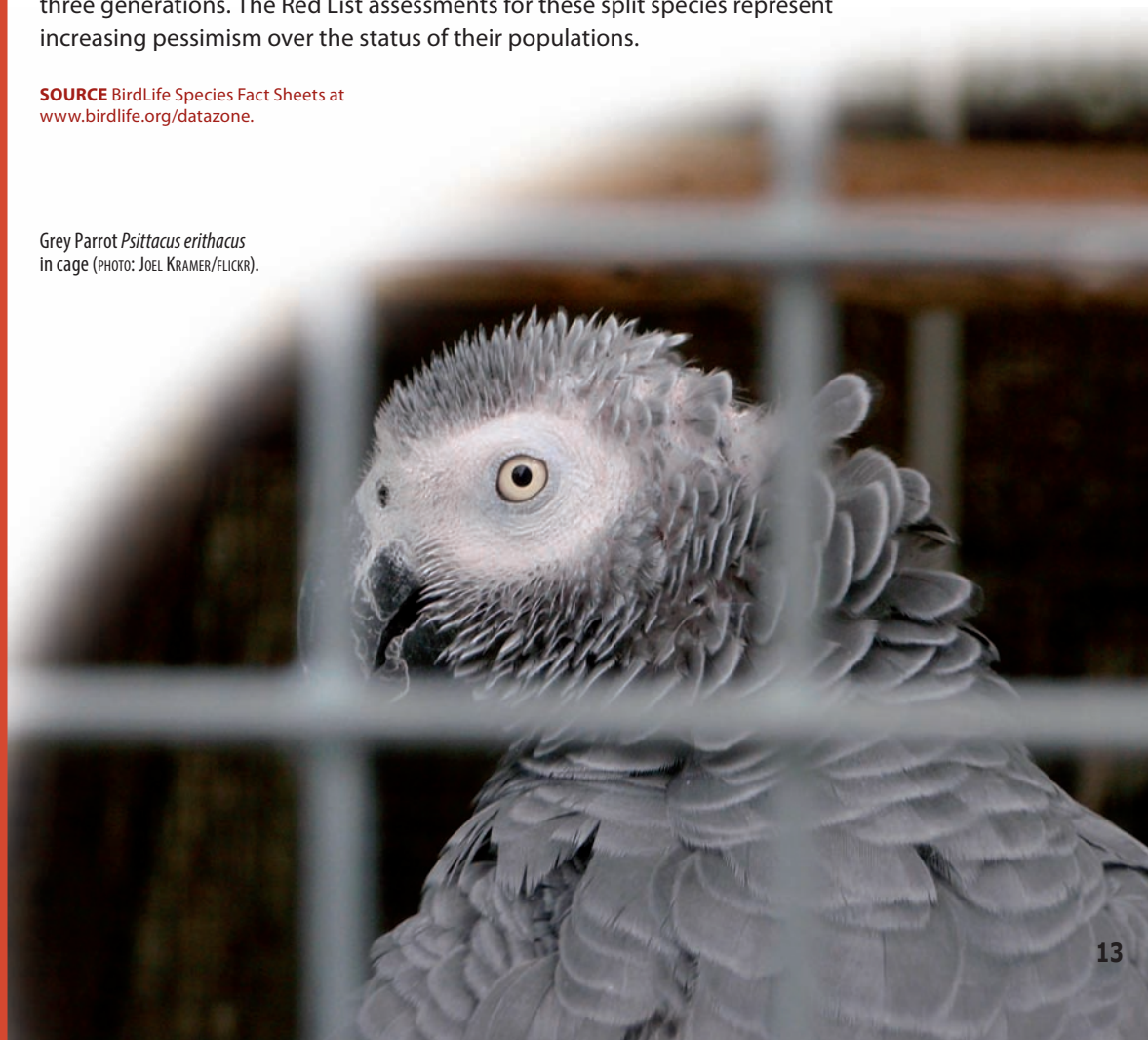
Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus* and Timneh Parrot *P. timneh* exemplify the problem of over-exploitation. These are conspicuous and charismatic species, and their popularity as pets means that they are heavily traded and suffer high trapping pressure. Trade data for these two species, collected for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), indicate that during 1994–2003, over 359,000 wild-caught individuals (the majority being Grey Parrots) were exported from range states. Numbers recorded in international trade are expected to represent only a proportion of total numbers extracted from the wild when considering pre-export mortality and smuggling, and national trade too. In 2012, BirdLife recognised Grey Parrot and Timneh Parrot as separate species and listed both as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List because the extent of the annual harvest for international trade, in combination with the rate of on-going habitat loss, means they are suspected to be undergoing rapid declines over three generations. The Red List assessments for these split species represent increasing pessimism over the status of their populations.

SOURCE BirdLife Species Fact Sheets at www.birdlife.org/datazone.



Grey Parrot *Psittacus erithacus* in cage (PHOTO: JOEL KRAMER/FLICKR).

Human induced climate change may pose the greatest challenge

Climate change is becoming an increasingly serious problem, threatening species directly and exacerbates other threats caused by human activities. Climate change and severe weather is known or suspected to be a threat to more than one-third of Africa's threatened bird species.

Climate change modelling highlights the vulnerability of birds in the Albertine Rift Valley

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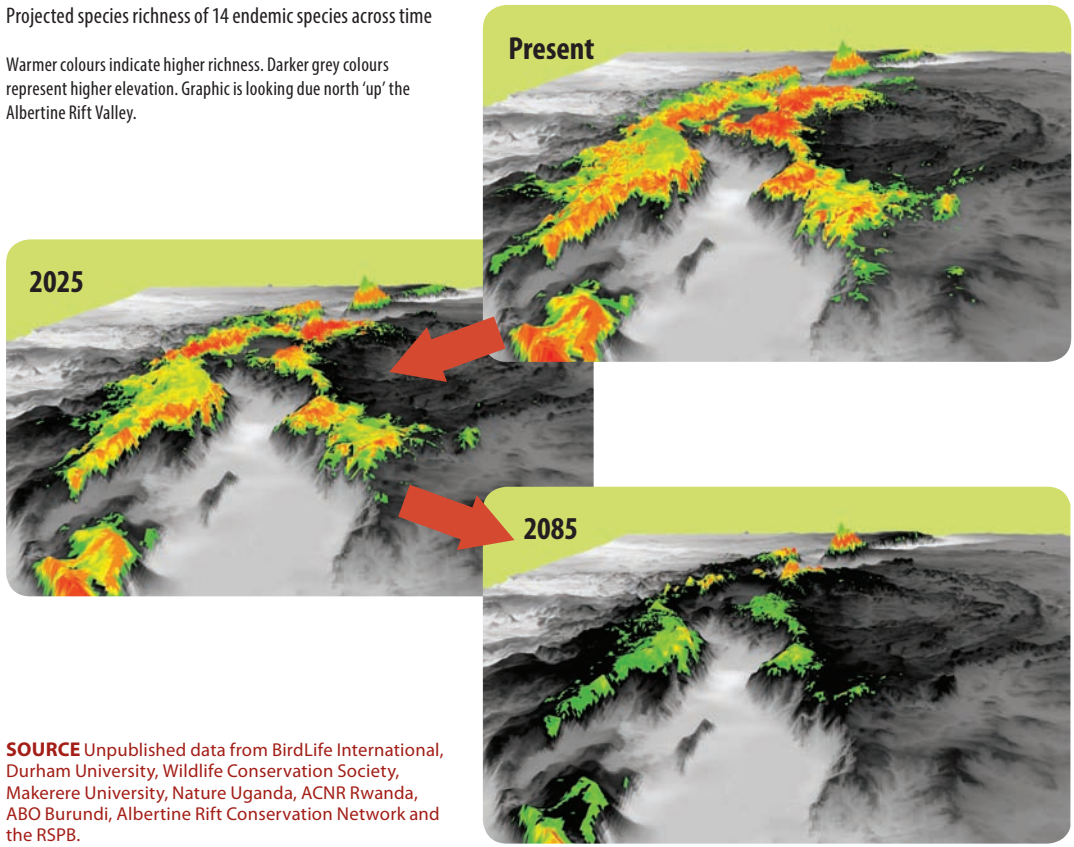
Climate-envelope modelling at high resolution in the Albertine Rift Valley of East Africa has allowed fine-scale projections of climate change impacts on birds in the region. Suitable climatic conditions for all species are projected to move upslope over the coming decades by, on average, 350 m by 2085, resulting in declines in potential distribution of 14 bird species endemic to the rift. At least one species, Red-collared Mountain-babbler *Kupeornis rufocinctus*, is projected to lose all suitable 'climate space' within the region.

Regal Sunbird *Nectarinia regia*, an Albertine Rift endemic and a species predicted to move altitudinally due to climate change (PHOTO: GREG AND YVONNE DEAN/WORLDWILDLIFEIMAGES.COM).

Projected species richness of 14 endemic species across time

Warmer colours indicate higher richness. Darker grey colours represent higher elevation. Graphic is looking due north 'up' the Albertine Rift Valley.



SOURCE Unpublished data from BirdLife International, Durham University, Wildlife Conservation Society, Makerere University, Nature Uganda, ACNR Rwanda, ABO Burundi, Albertine Rift Conservation Network and the RSPB.

Root causes of biodiversity loss are diverse and inter-linked

Unsustainable consumption and production patterns, widespread poverty, inequitable access to resources and an unfair global trade regime are some of the deeper causes that lead to biodiversity loss in Africa. Many IBAs face threats that impact both species and the ecosystem services delivered to both local people and the global community.

Cost-benefit analysis demonstrates that mining of soda ash at Lake Natron is not economically viable

tinyurl.com/casestudy507

Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor* (PHOTO: DAVID TIPLING).

A cost benefit analysis commissioned by the Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania, the BirdLife Partner in Tanzania, reveals that extraction of soda ash at Lake Natron would not be economically viable. In 2006, a proposal was put forward by Tata Chemicals Industries to construct a soda ash plant at Lake Natron, but was withdrawn in 2008 following local, national and international expressions of concern. Not only would it threaten the breeding habitat of the largest population of Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor* (2.5 million individuals, 75% of the global population), it would also deliver far worse returns for local people. The report demonstrates that communities around Lake Natron are better off without the soda ash plant as they stand to gain $1.26–$1.57 billion in the promotion of local livelihood alternatives. However, a loss of $44–$490 million will be incurred in the same time frame, if the Government invests in the plant. Based on the results of this report, the Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania along with other NGOs is lobbying the Government of Tanzania to re-assess its long-standing interest to build a soda ash factory at Lake Natron.

Exploitation of mineral resources, such as soda ash, negatively impacts the environment, depletes water resource and destroys habitats, and so assessment of the costs and benefits of such operations are needed (PHOTO: FABIAN HAAS).

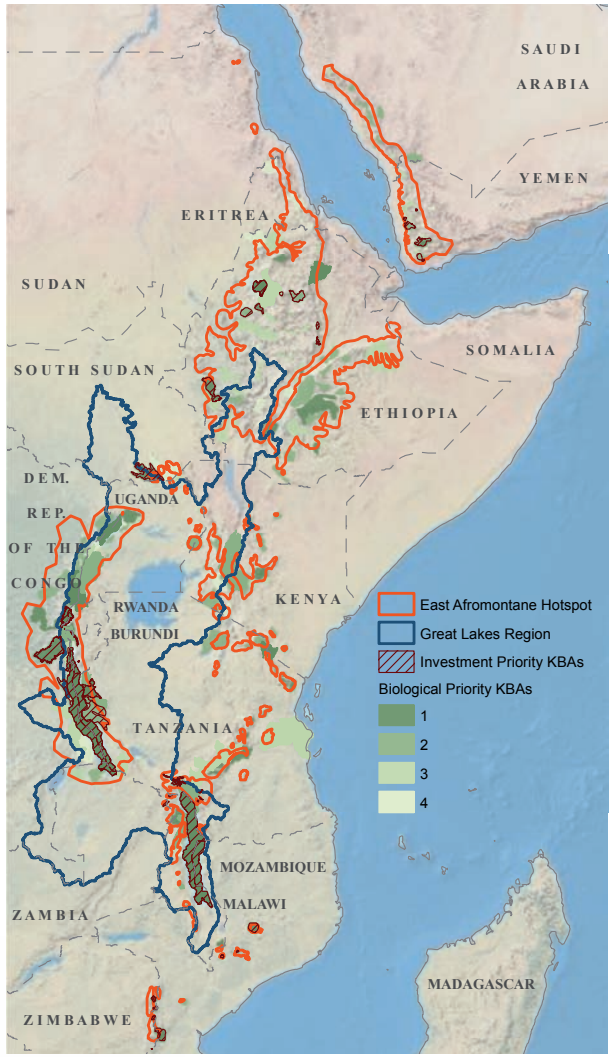
Investing in conservation

Africa is rich in biodiversity but economically poor, impeding conservation efforts. Conservation investments in Africa are still inadequate, but are most effective when targeted directly to where they are most needed.

Using IBAs to guide Regional Conservation Strategies

tinyurl.com/casestudy569

IBAs and Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) can be very effectively used to set biological and investment priorities for conservation. This is well illustrated in the Eastern Afromontane Biodiversity Hotspot, where an investment of US$9.8 million (2012–2017) by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) has been based on a conservation strategy that was largely guided by IBAs and other Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs). Another example is the development of the conservation strategy for the Great Lakes Region of East and Central Africa which has also used IBAs as one of the key tools for setting priorities, and investment for its implementation is being funded by the MacArthur Foundation.



Eastern Afromontane Biodiversity Hotspot and Great Lakes Region

SOURCE Adapted from CEPF Eastern Afromontane Biodiversity Hotspot: ecosystem profile (prepared by BirdLife International in 2012) and Conservation Strategy for the Great Lakes Region of East and Central Africa (prepared by BirdLife International in 2013).

Gelada baboons *Theropithecus gelada* (an Ethiopian Highlands endemic), Simien Moutains National Park, Ethiopia (PHOTO: INGRID LE RU).

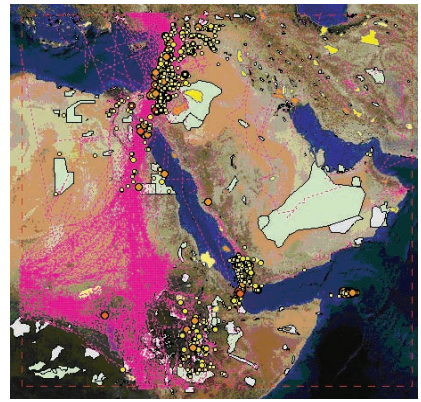
Integrating biodiversity into decision-making

Consideration of biodiversity in key national policies in Africa is vital. For example, recognizing the role that biodiversity, ecosystems and natural habitats can play in sustainable development, poverty reduction, climate change adaptation and mitigation, trade and international cooperation.

Mainstreaming conservation of migratory soaring birds into key productive sectors along the Rift Valley/Red Sea flyway

tinyurl.com/casestudy509

Managing and protecting migratory bird populations is particularly challenging because they travel thousands of miles in their seasonal migration. Threats along the Rift Valley / Red Sea Flyway include construction of power lines which result in collision. The nature of the threats to soaring birds and their pattern of migration, means that their conservation can only be achieved by considering land-use beyond the boundaries of protected areas and by involving a number of sectors, namely agriculture, energy, hunting, tourism and waste management. The 'Migratory Soaring Birds' project, funded by the Global Environment Facility and the United Nations Development Programme, aims to make this flyway 'soaring bird friendly', ensuring safe passage during migration. To achieve this, BirdLife Africa Partners are working with various productive sectors to mainstream protection of soaring birds into their development plans. The project is developing a series of guidance documents on good planning for renewable energy developments (wind, solar and power lines) in the Rift Valley / Red Sea area targeted at a range of stakeholders, including governments, developers, donor banks and communities.



Migratory Soaring Birds Sensitivity Map: Wind Energy

This map illustrates records (collated by BirdLife International) for soaring birds, including satellite tracks and IBAs. Locations (points and areas) can be assessed according to their sensitivity, by providing details of soaring birds in the vicinity and the related species-specific vulnerability to wind farm development. This tool provides knowledge on sensitive areas to help guide the strategic development and planning process.

SOURCE www.migratorysoaringbirds.undp.birdlife.org.

Common Crane *Grus grus* flying close to a wind turbine (PHOTO: NICK UPTON/RSPB-IMAGES.COM).

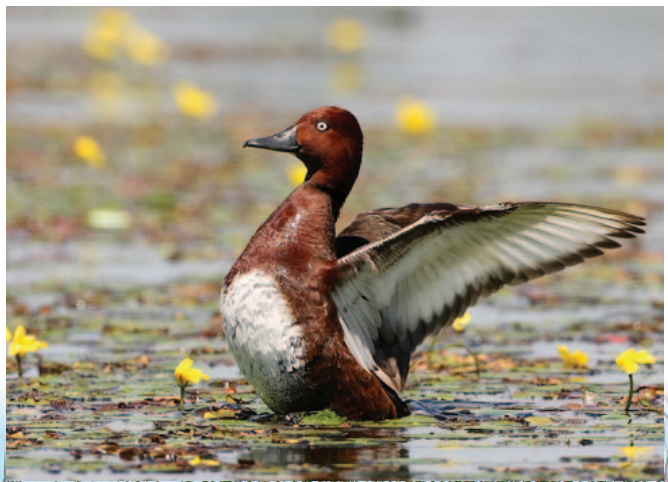
Understanding how people depend on biodiversity

The conservation of biodiversity is inextricably linked to the reduction of poverty in Africa. Effective management of biodiversity and sustainable use of natural resources calls for understanding how people depend on biodiversity.

Restoring important wetlands to conserve biodiversity and safeguard ecosystem services

tinyurl.com/casestudy36

The Nigerian Conservation Foundation, the BirdLife Partner in Nigeria, is assisting with the restoration of the Hadejia-Nguru wetland in northern Nigeria. Through community participation, the ecosystem restoration project seeks to control invasive alien *Typha* from the wetlands complex which support well over 10,000 people in eight surrounding villages, one of the most important overwintering sites for Palearctic migratory water birds in West Africa. As a result, bird populations have increased as well as the fish yield from artisanal fisheries upon which local communities depend on for their livelihoods. These tangible benefits in terms of income from sustainable fisheries will hopefully inspire other communities in the region to establish similar schemes.



Typha clearance in the Hadejia-Nguru wetland in Nigeria benefits migratory birds, such as Near Threatened Ferruginous Duck *Aythya nyroca*, and local communities (PHOTOS: JONATHAN BARNARD SIMAY GÁBOR/MME).

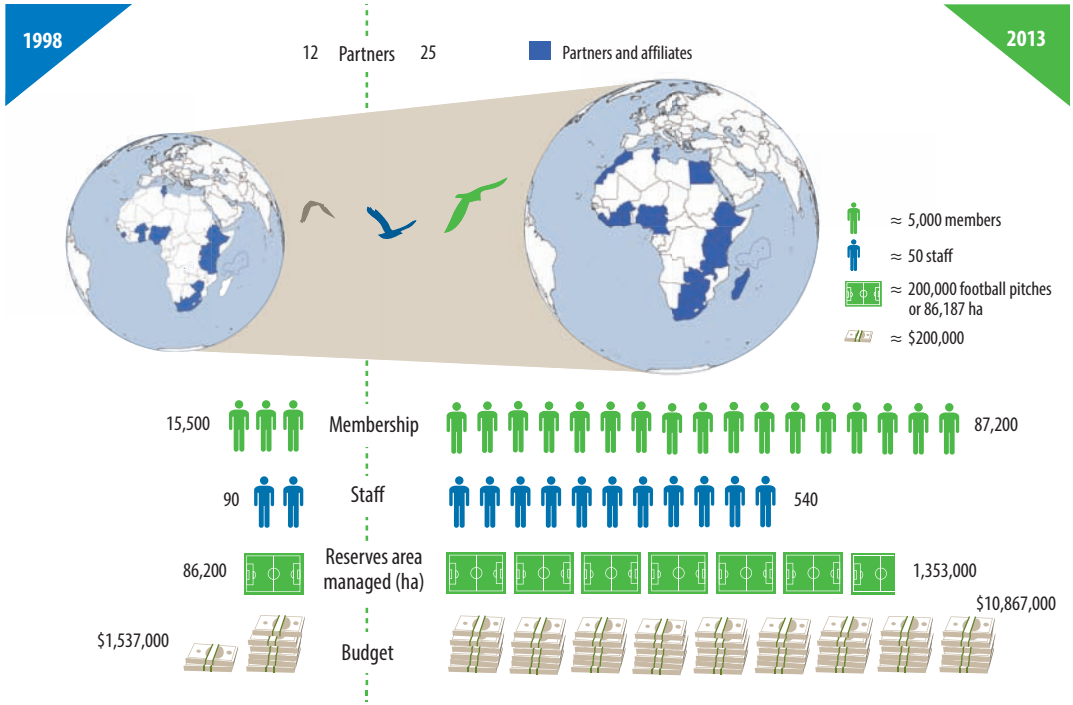
Empowering people for positive change

It is essential for conservation to be locally driven and to build partnerships that recognize the importance of biodiversity and its intricate value from the local to global level.

The growth of the BirdLife Africa Partnership

tinyurl.com/casestudy550

The BirdLife Partnership in Africa has grown in the last 15 years into an impressive network of national conservation organizations active in 40 countries.



The Global BirdLife Partnership was established in 1994 and numbers 121 Partners worldwide. The figures given above relate to BirdLife Africa Partners only and start in 1998, the earliest data for which such comprehensive information is available.

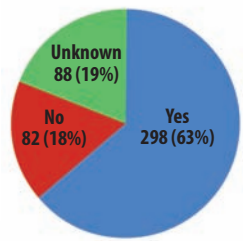
SOURCE BirdLife International.

BirdLife is empowering organisation and individuals at the local level

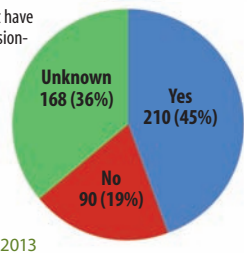
tinyurl.com/casestudy563

BirdLife Africa Partners have been supporting a growing network of over 400 Local Conservation Groups (LCGs) and Caretaker groups that live in or close to IBAs and engage in promoting the sustainable use and conservation of these sites. An important part of the work is supporting such groups in their efforts to become legally recognised entities, as this greatly increases their opportunities to play a part in decision-making and in the management of resources. In Africa, nearly two-thirds of these groups are legally registered, and 45% have representation in decision-making forums.

% of LCGs in Africa that are legally registered



% of LCGs in Africa that have representation on decision-making forums



SOURCE BirdLife 2013 survey of LCGs in Africa region.

Conserving IBAs as key sites for biodiversity

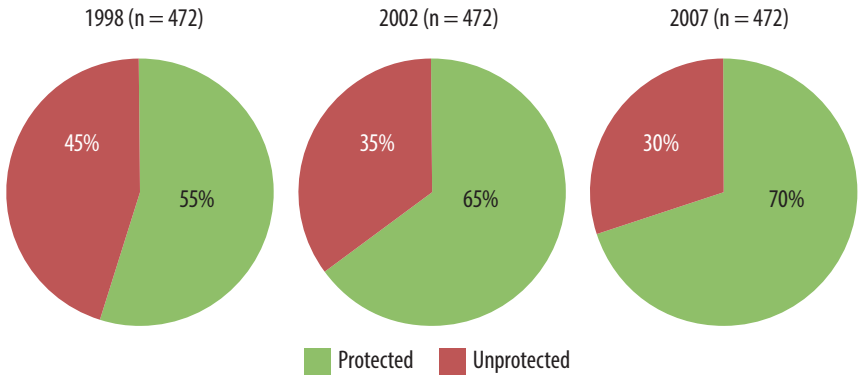
Conserving IBAs constitutes a highly effective approach for the conservation of birds and other biodiversity. While formal protection often remains the preferred option, there are many other, often innovative, approaches that can also be very successful.

Recognising the value of IBAs in the designation of new protected areas

tinyurl.com/casestudy246

From 1998 to 2002, BirdLife Africa Partners, in collaboration with GEF-UNDP, carried out a region-wide project to enhance biodiversity conservation in Africa. The project worked through local and national NGO-government partnerships in 472 IBAs in 10 countries. Of these IBAs, 55% had some form of legal protection before the project started, while 50 IBAs acquired some form of protected area status by the end of the project, raising the overall level of sites protected to 65%. By 2007, 19 out of the remaining unprotected sites had been given legal protection, including nine Ramsar (wetlands of international importance) sites, raising the percentage of protected sites to 70%.

Changes in the protection status of IBAs in 10 African countries, 1998–2007



SOURCE Arinaitwe *et al.* (2007) *Ostrich* 78(2): 139–143.

Panoramic view of Mabu Forest in Northern Mozambique (PHOTO: JULIAN BAYLISS).

Sustaining birds in the wider landscape and beyond national boundaries

Birds and biodiversity do not respect boundaries. Many bird species are largely found outside important sites and protected areas. It is therefore important to manage the wider landscape and seascapes in a way that is biodiversity-friendly.

Protecting trans-boundary critical forest ecosystems

tinyurl.com/casestudy416

White-necked Picathartes *Picathartes gymnocephalus* (PHOTO: GUY SHORROCK RSPB-IMAGES.COM).

The Upper Guinea Forest once covered most of Sierra Leone, south-east Guinea, Liberia, southern Côte D'Ivoire and south-west Ghana. Today, much of the forest is degraded and the remaining patches are highly fragmented. However, this region remains one of the world's most biodiversity-rich regions: of the 240–250 forest dependent birds in the region—such as White-breasted Guineafowl *Agelastes meleagrides* and White-necked Picathartes *Picathartes gymnocephalus* (both Vulnerable)—more than 25 are threatened or restricted-range species. It is also home to more than 50 mammal species, such as Forest Elephant, Pygmy Hippo and ten species of primate, including Chimpanzee.

Ambitious plans are now underway to establish a trans-boundary protected area across the Sierra Leone-Liberia border that could provide a model for long-term conservation throughout the region. The project entitled the *Across the River – Tranboundary Peace Park project* is being coordinated by BirdLife Partners—the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone, the Society for Conservation of Nature of Liberia and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (BirdLife Partner in the UK)—working with the Governments of Sierra Leone and Liberia. The conservation of this 'Forest of Hope' has received continuous support from the presidents of both countries.

The trans-boundary Peace Park was launched by the Presidents of Sierra Leone and Liberia in May 2009 (PHOTO: GILBERT KOKER).

The Upper Guinea Forest Ecosystem is one of the world's most biodiversity-rich regions (PHOTO: DAVID ZELLER/RSPB).

Saving species from extinction

Direct intervention is necessary when a species is rapidly declining and requires targeted action. With appropriate measures, it is possible to recover species from the verge of extinction. This is dependent on sound research, sustainable finance, long-term commitment and targeted intensive management. BirdLife Africa Partners are identifying Species Guardians (organizations and individuals best placed to act) and linking them with Species Champions (donor organization or individuals) to safeguard Critically Endangered and nationally important species.

Yes we can save species in our lifetime: an incredible success story

tinyurl.com/casestudy267

The first IUCN Red Book in 1969 lamented the plight of the birds of the Seychelles which had more Critically Endangered endemic birds than any other country in Africa apart from Madagascar. The previous year the International Council for Bird Preservation (the precursor of BirdLife International) purchased Cousin Island to save the Seychelles Warbler *Acrocephalus seychellensis*. Today, through the efforts of Nature Seychelles, the BirdLife Partner in the Seychelles, the warbler has been downlisted from Critically Endangered to Vulnerable, and Nature Seychelles intends to push it down further to Near Threatened by 2014, the first time this will have been achieved though conservation action for such a highly threatened bird.

In the last 10 years other Seychelles birds have also been saved. For example, in 1970 there were only 25 surviving Seychelles Magpie Robin *Copsychus sechellarum* and all on one island (Fregate Island). Through an active conservation programme coordinated by BirdLife International, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (the BirdLife Partner in the UK) and Nature Seychelles, the total number of birds has risen significantly to 260 on five islands and it was downlisted to Endangered in 2005. In 2008, the Seychelles Paradise-flycatcher *Terpsiphone corvina*, the only Critically Endangered bird left in Seychelles, was translocated by Nature Seychelles and the Durrell Institute of Conservation and Ecology to a second island (Denis), from its stronghold on La Digue Island, and may warrant downlisting in the near future.

These huge successes can be attributed to the long term commitment by Nature Seychelles, working with a range of stakeholders to remove alien species and improve habitats, thereby opening the door for the successful establishment of new populations of threatened species. A similar approach has been taken by the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation resulting in the recovery of Mauritius (Eco) Parakeet *Psittacula eques* from a dozen known individuals in the 1990s to some 580 individuals today.

Seychelles Magpie-robin *Copsychus sechellarum* and Mauritius Parakeet *Psittacula eques*, two species brought back from the brink of extinction (PHOTOS: PETER CHADWICK AND PETER STEWARD).

Using birds to track the health of our environment

BirdLife has developed a framework for monitoring IBAs using a state-pressure-response model. This model helps to assess the status of birds and their habitats, and act as an early-warning system. Indicators from these data form an important component of a suite of indicators needed to track the state of biodiversity, and progress towards targeted and sustainable development.

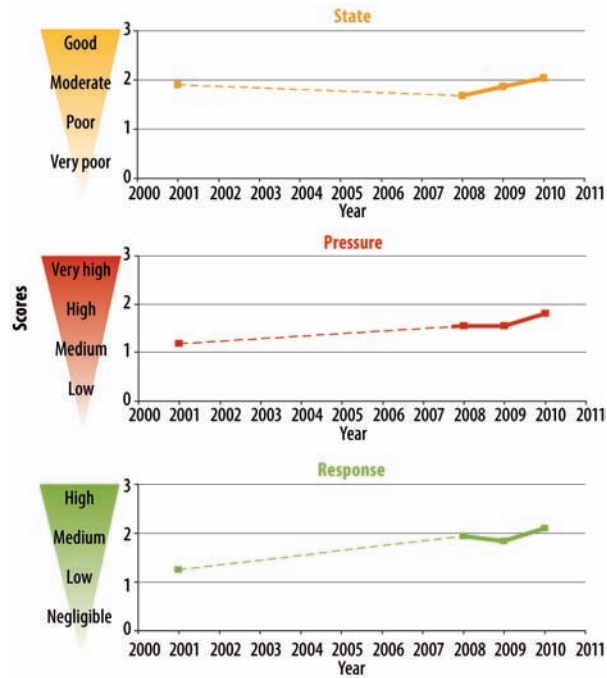
Effective IBA monitoring is vital

tinyurl.com/casestudy503

Monitoring of IBAs provides information on how effectively individual sites are contributing to wider conservation objectives. Monitoring is carried out through regular assessments in which the IBA is scored using a simple, four-point scale against indicators of pressure (threats), state (condition) and response (conservation actions, including protection). An analysis of data from IBA networks in eight African countries where IBA monitoring is well established by BirdLife Africa Partners has shown that, although pressures on IBAs here increased over the period 2001–2010, there has been some overall recent improvement in site condition, perhaps because conservation responses are also growing. While a time lag between the start of conservation actions and realizing their impacts can be expected, it is evident that, although efforts towards conserving biodiversity at IBAs have improved, they have been insufficient to match increasing pressures.

IBA monitoring is well established in Africa and providing conservationists with vital information on the changing status of the region's biodiversity (PHOTO: CAROLINE THOMAS/RSPB).

Monitoring scores for IBA networks in eight African countries



Data from IBA networks in Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Kenya, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Trends need to be interpreted with caution because the number and subset of IBAs assessed varies between years (2001 = 186, 2008 = 186, 2009 = 178, 2010 = 147).

SOURCE BirdLife International (2011) *Status and trends of biodiversity in Africa's protected areas (2001–2010): a contribution to reducing biodiversity loss*. Nairobi: BirdLife International.

An overview of BirdLife's online resources

Much of the data and information collated by BirdLife Africa Partners is available through a range of online resources including case studies, factsheets for all of Africa's bird species and IBAs, and country profiles with biodiversity statistics for all African countries.

Section	URL	QR code
State of the world's birds 	**www.birdlife.org/datazone/sowb** An online tool providing access to over 350 case studies to help inform decisions, detailed spotlights on BirdLife's key areas of engagement, and a wide range of publications, including State of the nation's birds reports.	
Species factsheets 	**www.birdlife.org/datazone/species** Detailed factsheets for all the world's birds (>10,000), containing information on IUCN Red List status, distribution, population, ecology, threats, and actions underway and needed.	
Site factsheets 	**www.birdlife.org/datazone/site** Detailed factsheets for >12,000 IBAs in nearly 200 countries, with information on key species and habitats, threats, protection status, conservation actions, local communities, and ecosystem services.	
Marine e-atlas 	**www.birdlife.org/datazone/marine** A dynamic and interactive map providing information on all the world's seabirds, breeding colonies, important marine sites, their protection status and relationship to EBSAs.	
Country profiles 	**www.birdlife.org/datazone/country** Biodiversity statistics, graphs and maps for every country of the world, including information on bird species and their IUCN Red List status, IBAs and their protection status, and environmental treaties.	
CBD support 	**www.birdlife.org/datazone/info/CBDsupport** A dedicated section of BirdLife's website that member states to the CBD can draw upon when setting priorities, tracking success, developing NBSAPs, preventing extinctions, and designing protected area networks.	
GTB Forums 	**www.birdlife.org/globally-threatened-bird-forums/** Visit the Globally Threatened Bird Forums to contribute information on birds relevant to their risk of extinction and help to ensure that they are correctly classified on the IUCN Red List.	

BirdLife Africa

The Birdlife Africa Partnership is a growing network of 25 conservation organizations, with a combined total of more than 500 staff and 87,000 members. Through projects, BirdLife is active in a further 15 countries, hence overall working in a total of 40 countries.

BirdLife Partners in Africa are supported by the BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat with offices in Nairobi, Kenya and Accra, Ghana. The Secretariat exists to ensure that the BirdLife Partners in Africa have access to financial and technical resources and have the profile and connections necessary to deliver the BirdLife programme in Africa.

To learn more about BirdLife in Africa visit: www.birdlife.org/africa

BirdLife International is the world's largest nature conservation Partnership. Together we are 25 BirdLife Partners in Africa and 121 worldwide—one per country or territory—and growing with 13 million members and supporters, more than 7,000 local conservation groups and 7,400 staff.

BirdLife's vision is a world rich in biodiversity, where people and nature live in harmony. We are driven by our belief that local people, working for nature in their own places but connected nationally and internationally through our global Partnership, are the key to sustaining all life on this planet. This unique local-to-global approach delivers high impact and long-term conservation for the benefit of nature and people.

BirdLife is the world leader in bird conservation. Rigorous science informed by practical feedback from projects on the ground in important sites and habitats enables us to implement successful conservation programmes for birds and all of nature.

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BirdLife INTERNATIONAL

Partnership for nature and people

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