

Membership

As part of raising the profile of ABC and recruitment of new members, efforts were made to promote ABC through circulating ABC brochures via email to as many individuals as possible. There was a response from some who even promised to join ABC but probably require follow up. Other efforts were made to display ABC material during the 14th Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) meeting at UNEP, Nairobi, Kenya on 10 - 21 May 2010 where BirdLife and NatureKenya had a stand. ABC sent the updated soft copies of posters on time. The main challenge in raising the profile of ABC still remains lack of adequate material to display at meetings or at the office (NatureKenya and BirdLife). One poster was provided and is now displayed at NatureKenya and is very useful in raising profile of ABC. More copies will be needed including past copies of the ABC Bulletin for display at these offices and during meetings. This will become handy when taking advantage of local, regional and international meetings and events to raise the profile of ABC and recruit new members. There is a very big potential to target the tourism industry through the tour guides. People expressed appreciation to ABC for the sponsored membership scheme as it will go a long way in supporting upcoming ornithologists who would otherwise have been unable to afford paid-up membership. A few names of potential beneficiaries to this scheme were submitted for review and consideration.

There has been a great interest by volunteers to participate at the African waterfowl Counts in Kenya (100+ during counts at one site). Leveraging on this enthusiasm, we plan to promote ABC more through such events (e.g. talks or distribution of material). However, this enthusiasm also brings with it challenges since the organizers get overwhelmed with the participants especially considering the financial constraints the Waterfowl Census organizers are facing.

Communication and other support

There has been a very good communication and liaison with ABC and the support provided has been very satisfactory especially considering that this is my first year as Country Rep and needed a lot of quick "induction". People have also appreciated ABC support in terms of the funding and other resources on the website (including the image database / gallery). We have also supported birdwatchers visiting the country by advising on potential tour guides and at times places to visit. NatureKenya has been very supportive too in terms of advising on tour guides especially those based at respective sites. The issue of the Country Rep (CR) attending Bird Committee meetings of NatureKenya (BirdLife in Kenya) has been discussed and it is likely that the CR may in future be providing input to these meetings.

As part of supporting local talents and promoting local tour guides, there is a close working relationships with site-based tour guides (some of them drawn from the Site Support Groups). NatureKenya is developing a comprehensive database of these individuals and potential visitors will be advised accordingly on local guides (at site, national, regional levels). Possibly these guides who are not yet members of ABC will also be encouraged to join and network.

A few cases of delayed delivery of the Bulletin were noted for some members but generally, people are happy with the quality and coverage of the Bulletin.

In terms of the africabirdinggroup.com forum, there is also need to promote it widely so that there is a lot of contribution from the local upcoming ornithologists. This would be a very nice way of capacity building and networking for locals. A mixture of contributions from local amateur birdwatchers and the more seasoned birdwatcher locally or abroad would blend well. The aspect of exchange programmes between countries where capacity is less with those it is better would also help build capacity of African ornithologists including support to attend workshops and capacity building events.

Projects

Three projects in Kenya were funded through the ABC Conservation Fund. Posting the recipients of funds is useful and informative. However, would it be possible to include a one paragraph summary of the funded projects so that people have access to this information? This may avoid duplication. A project report from the African Grey Parrot was useful in terms of increased knowledge on the status of the species but above all

highlighted issues to do with lack of capacity by Customs Department in bird trade related issues preventive enforcement. This gap needs to be filled through tailor-made capacity building efforts at various levels. As part of building synergies, it would be very useful to get some of the grantees to disseminate their results widely including (if possible) short articles in BirdLife bi-annual newsletter. The ABC Bulletin is also a very useful mode of disseminating results and findings from ongoing work. I was just wondering (loudly) whether there would be an opportunity or provision to reserve ¼ to ½ of a page for BirdLife Africa Secretariat to provide updates / summary on species work in Africa. This would be useful in terms of sharing information especially between conservationists and research community.

Issues/challenges

- Planned development projects at key biodiversity sites in Kenya (Tana River Delta and Jatropha in Dakatcha woodland IBAs) pose a great danger to sites' integrity and species survival at these sites.
- Furadan use and poisoning of birds and mammals at various sites.
- Declines in vultures (habitat destruction and poisoning).
- Need for new information on Globally Threatened species to facilitate conservation action.
- Invasive birds such as Indian House Crows (raising the profile of this problem including forums to share information and lessons learnt i.e. conferences).
- Sometimes lack of resources to print / prepare ABC advocacy material for display at meetings.
- Need to capitalize on birdwatchers network to also contribute data for the online BLI WordBirds.Org project (<http://www.worldbirds.org/mappointal/worldmap.php?m=3>).