

# PROGRESS REPORT

DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING CAPACITY FOR A RANGER-BASED OXPECKER  
MONITORING PROGRAMME FOR PROTECTED AREAS IN KENYA

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PROGRESS REPORT TO AFRICAN BIRD CLUB  
ON A PROJECT FUNDED BY THE AFRICAN BIRD CLUB GRANT

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## SUMMARY

Considerable achievements were made in meeting the project's important objectives. A select team of five rangers were identified in the southern conservation area of Kenya Wildlife Service administrative areas. A total of four binoculars received from Nature Kenya through RSPB, and three training sessions undertaken. Additional support of six binoculars and one GPS is expected from IDEA WILD. Given the background of the officers, the preliminary focus was on the fundamentals of ornithology that included basic skills in bird identification skills, ornithological data collection and basic skills of use and maintenance of binoculars. This was followed with two field sessions to enable the officers have a feel and practice bird identification. A number of unexpected logistical setbacks hindered the achievements of objectives within the stated time frame. This was due to the fact that the officers are allocated other duties. The project requests for the extension of the project so as to be able to meet the remaining objectives. Preparation of a training manual with special focus on oxpecker was initiated. It is hoped that an all-encompassing manual on monitoring for common and easily identifiable birds shall be produced in this pilot project once the African Bird Club releases the remaining project funding. Additional requests for support would also be sought as the support from African Bird Club might not be adequate. The expected support from the core budget from Research Division of Kenya Wildlife Service was not forthcoming because of the on-going budget cuts that targets among other things – capacity building programmes. Despite the initial achievements, the project was unable to expand the scope of coverage and engage more officers at initial stage. It might not be possible to meet this objective in the short-term.

## PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The following activities as described in the proposal were carried out between March and April 2009;

- Second week of March 2009: Working closely with the Southern Conservation Area of Kenya Wildlife Service, the project identified a team of officers for fundamental of ornithology focusing mainly on bird identification, use and care of field equipment;
- 4<sup>th</sup> week of March – 2<sup>nd</sup> week of April 2009: In-house training and field visits to practice bird identification and recording skills. During these sessions, a special schedule was organized

for training on basic ecology and distribution of oxpeckers in Kenya including potential threats to their conservation;

- 4<sup>th</sup> week of April 2009: Field visit for five officers to Kitengela Dispersal area to search for oxpecker. This area was selected because it has high numbers of migratory herbivores, and could be ideal to spot the woodpeckers especially the Yellow-billed Oxpecker. The area is also not far from Kenya Wildlife Service headquarters where the project executant is based. This was to ensure that the available resources and funds are used in the most intensive way.

## GENERAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Between March and April 2009, the project continued without significant interruption with the planned activities being undertaken. No collaborations were sought during this first phase. However, strategic collaborations are possible in future under the IBA monitoring programme with the Nature Kenya (BirdLife International Partner in Kenya). This will take time as the general interest and appreciation of birds particularly among the rangers is still low at Kenya Wildlife Service. But in the long-term, this initiative is important for future capacity building programme for involvement of more rangers.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

A summary of financial report, by budget lines, is attached (Tables 1). The funding granted for the project was **£1500.00** of which **£600.00** was for direct equipment support delivered through Nature Kenya (BirdLife International Partner in Kenya). So far, a total of **£450.00** converted to **KES 45,000.00** (at the prevailing exchange at the time of disbursement) have been released. Total expenditure as at the end of April was **KES 42,440.00**. A balance of **KES 2,560.00** is available for the next phase of the project.

## REQUEST TO AFRICAN BIRD CLUB

The project met one of the expected project outputs, i.e. identification of core team of rangers and undertaking initial training particularly on fundamentals of ornithology to increase awareness. This would form a basis for a functional programme for oxpecker monitoring and other easily identifiable birds. However, based on the experience at this pilot phase, more resources will be required. Ideally the support should come from local sources especially from

the Kenya Wildlife Service. The need to create enthusiasm among rangers would be key in ensuring domestication of ranger-based monitoring programmes within Kenya Wildlife Service. However, this cannot be achieved within a short time as there is still need to create greater awareness in the concept of engaging rangers in a monitoring programme. In addition, there is still shortage of equipment especially binoculars and GPS to enable engagement of a bigger group. However, a foundation has been laid, and the project is of its kind within Kenya Wildlife Service whereby officers from Security section get involved in scientific work.

The project funds from African Bird Club were **£900.00**. The first payment of **£450.00** has already been made. A significant amount of this funding has already been spent in the project activities as shown in the attached financial summary. The project executants request for the release of the remaining **£450.00**. This will enable production of a manual, purchase of birdguides and facilitate field activities particularly in Kitengela Dispersal Area near Nairobi National Park.

**Table 1: Summary of project expenditures from the first disbursement of KES 45,000.00 from African Bird Club**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Expenditure (KES) as at 1<sup>st</sup> May 2009</b>
Professional services	12,400.00
Travel	13,500.00
Field subsistence	10,200.00
Project running expenses	4,200.00
Stationery and printing	2,140.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>42,440.00</b>
<i>Balance from the first tranche of KES 45,000.00</i>	2,560.00

**REQUESTED FROM AFRICAN BIRD CLUB: LAST TRANCHE OF £450.00**



Figure 1. Yellow-billed Oxpecker on African Buffalo near Nairobi National Park



Figure 2: Field rangers participants in oxpecker training programme



Figure 3: A field search session for oxpecker in Kitengela Dispersal Area