

REPORT ON THE USE OF ABC FUNDS AT MAKERERE UNIVERSITY, 2010-2011

Two interns have been employed for the past year, Ms Lilian Twanza, who has been completing her MSc thesis, and Osman Mwebe, a recent graduate. Lilian was mainly funded from the ABC grant, and Osman from the Peregrine Fund. However, they sometimes worked together, for example on bird counts in the field.

Urban birds. Birds in cities are much less studied than in rural and protected areas, yet many species occur in and around urban areas. For Kampala, we have some previous data, mainly from Makerere Hill, much of which is occupied by the university, and for which some lists go back to the 1960s. So far, 202 species have been recorded from this area (compared to 550 from the greater Kampala area, and 1040 for Uganda). To learn more, we set up six 2 km transects in sites ranging from the city centre to the fringes, with Makerere somewhere in between. The methods are those of the Bird Population Monitoring Programme, administered by NatureUganda and including some 60 other sites all over Uganda. Twelve months of counts have just been completed, and the analysis will continue over the next few weeks, with the intention of drafting an MS for, most probably, *Scopus*. We are already surprised by the number and variety of birds found in some of the most densely-populated parts of Kampala, and even more so by the variety in outer areas.

Further work on this project has included using Google Earth to permanently record the transect routes, including their 200 m sections, and to estimate hard surfaces (buildings, roads, etc) along each transect and hence to see how bird numbers relate to those variables.

Lilian also entered-up and checked the results of **road counts of raptors**, mainly funded by TPF, and these are currently with Dr Phil Shaw of St Andrew's University, who has kindly undertaken to do Distance analyses on them.

As part of her wider experience-gaining, Lilian has also entered, checked and made Distance analyses of some of my **data from Cyprus** (which is nearly Africa!)

Osman has made weekly counts of Marabous nesting at Makerere, and less often in Kampala as a whole. The numbers have declined over each of the last four years, whilst at the same time, some 50 pairs have, for the third successive year, begun nesting 2-3 months earlier than usual; we would like to investigate this a bit more.

Cattle Egrets have become progressively more urban over the past few years, first roosting near the centre of Kampala and now nesting at several urban/suburban sites. We have begun a review of this subject in Africa as a whole, with a view to an article on the subject (already in draft, but one more season's data would add more detail).

FUNDS

The greater part of the funds was spent on Lilian's Stipend, and most of the rest on transport around Kampala, as well as some computing and printing costs. Details can be provided, if required.

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