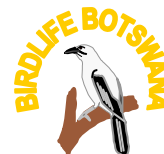


## Bird Population Monitoring



**Project Number:** 210-X-1406

**Project Title:** Bird Population Monitoring in Botswana

**Name of the Local [NGO][CBO]:** BirdLife Botswana

**Project Officer:** Keddy Mooketsa

**Grant recipient's Address:** P O Box 26691, Game City, Gaborone

**Location of project:** Botswana

**Date of signature of the Agreement:** 15-3-2010

### Summary

Evidence obtained from bird monitoring programmes in Europe by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and its partners, has shown how Wild Bird Indicators can be successfully used to enhance and improve the management of natural resources and to inform environmental decision-making. The RSPB, in its effort to establish a Wild Bird Indicator in African countries, has funded a two year project titled "Bird Population Monitoring In Botswana" implemented by BirdLife Botswana.

The RSPB fund supports the National Project Coordinator and the team to implement and report on a Bird Population Monitoring scheme in accordance with the Global Environment Facility Small Grant Programme (GEF SGP) funded project. The GEF SGP project entitled, *Common Bird Monitoring in Botswana: Involving citizens in biodiversity monitoring*, also called Bird Population Monitoring project (BPM) is a two year project aimed at developing a Bird Population Monitoring scheme for Botswana to measure changes in bird numbers.

### Objectives of the project

1. To develop a Wild Bird Index for Botswana showing bird population trends over time and to use these trends to set conservation priorities, report on biodiversity changes/state of the environment in Botswana
2. To show that changes in the overall condition of ecosystems can be used by decision-makers to influence politicians to find suitable biodiversity management solutions
3. To increase levels of community participation through building the appropriate capacity
4. To build the capacity of Botswana by promoting knowledge and interest in birds and bird watching

Overall BirdLife Botswana has been encouraged by the response from Society members and members of the public to take part in the programme and the technical support from the RSPB staff. There is a genuine desire by participants to learn more about birds and there is a recognised enjoyment by participants taking part in the programme. The membership base has been increased as a result of this greater awareness. BirdLife Botswana will be considering how

the outputs of the programme can be used for the greater benefit of Botswana. The Society is confident that this programme will continue to grow and an even greater participation by the public will unfold in the years ahead.

## Results of February 2011 counts

In February 2011 a team of counters throughout the country counted birds in their allocated transects using Point Count methodology<sup>1</sup>. The results obtained from the February 2011 count showed that a total of 218 observers have undertaken 161 transects in contrast to 159 observers with 122 transects undertaken in the November 2010 count. Of the 105 chosen grids around Botswana 62 transects were undertaken in those grids and the other 99 transects were undertaken outside the designated grid squares. The distribution of the transects and the uncovered designated grid squares after the February 2011 count is shown on figure 1. There were 27 605 birds and 352 bird species recorded as opposed to 14 056 birds and 289 bird species recorded during the previous count.

The average number of birds recorded per transect was 177 and the average number of species recorded was 25 per transect as opposed to 123 average number of birds recorded per transect and 23 average number of species recorded per transect for the November 2010 count. The Society thinks that the increase in number of birds recorded per transect is due to significant breeding during the wet season by some species, such as Red-billed Quelea, and to the improved bird identification skills of some of the observers.

The most common species recorded by participants was *Cape Turtle-Dove* 133, *Laughing Dove* 100, *Cape Glossy Starling* 97, *Fork-tailed Drongo* 93, *Blue Waxbill* 77, *Southern Yellow-billed Hornbill* 77, *White-browed Sparrow-Weaver* 72, *European Barn Swallow* 69, *Grey Go-away Bird* 67 and *Crimson-breasted Boubou* 67. The species with the highest number counted for all transects were *Red-billed Quelea* 3085, *Cape Turtle-Dove* 2169, *European Barn Swallow* 1390, *White-browed Sparrow-Weaver* 880, *Laughing Dove* 786, *Scaly-feathered Finch* 768, *Cape Glossy Starling* 644, *Black-chested Prinia* 491, *Cattle Egret* 472 and *Blue Waxbill* 469.

With respect to the birds of concern species or the globally threatened species, there were 25 *Bateleurs*, 72 *White-backed Vultures*, 9 *Lappet-faced Vultures*, 20 *Cape Vultures*, 24 *Kori bustards* recorded in February 2011 compared to 10 *Bateleurs*, 17 *White-backed Vultures*, 2 *Lappet-faced Vultures*, 5 *Cape Vultures*, 6 *Kori Bustards* recorded in November 2010 count. There was a notable increase of the alien species, the *Common Myna*, with 25 records as opposed to 8 records in November 2010 count.

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<sup>1</sup> Point count is the methodology used for Bird Population Monitoring Programme in Botswana. The observers count birds from a 2 km transect stopping every 200 m for five minutes to record birds that they see or hear. Observers are allocated transects by the project coordinator and local representatives in different branches using the 105 designated grid squares chosen throughout Botswana. Transect allocations are done randomly where there is no designated grid square present near the participants to allow flexibility within the programme. The transects are counted by foot or vehicle in early mornings only.

