



BIRD POPULATION MONITORING PROGRAMME INSTRUCTION SHEET

Thank you for volunteering to take part in the Birdlife Botswana's Bird Population Monitoring (BPM) Programme, which has been designed to collect quality information of birds and to highlight population trends in Botswana overtime. The surveys are quick, simple and an enjoyable birdwatching exercises.

The main aims of BPM

1. To provide information on yearly and longer-term changes in population levels for a wide range of birds across a variety of habitats throughout Botswana.
2. To promote a greater understanding of the population biology of birds and in particular to focus on factors responsible for declines.
3. To promote bird conservation by involving volunteer observers throughout Botswana.

Which Quarter Degree Square should you survey?

Once you have expressed a wish to be involved in the scheme, you will be allocated a transect within a randomly selected grid square. Sites have been chosen according to a formal sampling strategy to cover all habitats and regions. Please make every effort to cover the site that is allocated to you.

In cases where survey work proves impossible in a large part of the site you have been allocated, e.g. because it is physically impossible to visit, or access permissions are not granted, please report this to your BLB Regional Representative or the BPM Project Officer so that a replacement site can be provided. It is **very important** not to reject sites because they appear uninteresting – squares containing few species in degraded habitats are just as valuable as squares with many species in more pristine habitats.

Finding and marking a route

You will be provided with precise information regarding the transect route. This route must be followed to ensure consistency of recording at that site. If the site has never been covered before, you will need to create your own transect route and the Bird Life office will help in giving the site a unique identifying name and code. Please consistently use these details to avoid misallocation of your transect. If you need advice on an area to choose then contact your local BLB Office.

How to make a Point Count Transect

- The bird survey will take the form of a point count transect, each containing 11 counting points (numbered 1 to 11) 200m apart, covering a distance of approximately 2.0 km.
- If a GPS is available, please record the GPS waypoints at the beginning and end of your transect.
- We encourage participants to do their transect in pairs where possible. This minimises any security threats and provides a backup should one person not be available.

- A point transect may take any shape, but to minimise the risk of double counting, observers should ensure that if a circular route is chosen that no point is within 200m of any other.
- Routes can be based on easily identifiable and navigable tracks or paths to help find in future counts.

When to visit

Each site should be surveyed twice a year, once in November and February. The first point count should ideally start around 6-7am and the last finish before 10am, as birds are generally more active in the morning. Please try to keep the starting times and visit dates similar within and across years.

Weather

Cloud cover		Rain		Wind		Visibility	
0 – 1/3 rd	= 1	None	= 1	Calm	= 1	Good	= 1
1/3 – 2/3 ^{rds}	= 2	Light	= 2	Light	= 2	Moderate	= 2
2/3 ^{rds} – total	= 3	Heavy	= 3	Strong	= 3	Poor	= 3

Please do not attempt to carry out surveys in conditions of heavy rain, poor visibility or strong wind. Birds generally become inactive in windy and wet conditions. However, activity often increases considerably after rain showers and therefore showery weather is generally okay for conducting surveys. Please record weather conditions in the boxes provided on the forms that describe cloud cover, rain, wind speed, and visibility. Choose one number (1-3) from each of the four headings below and enter these in the box provided. If the weather conditions change during your survey visit, please select a single weather category that best represents the overall conditions.

Recording birds

- On arrival at each point, start counting birds immediately.
- Record and identify all birds that you see or hear for a set period of 5 minutes.
- Birds that are flushed as you approach a point may be recorded in the totals for that point.
- **Do not** record birds whilst moving between the 200 m points.
- Record the time that the count started at each point in the space provided on the recording forms.
- Record all the birds in the appropriate point columns 1-11.
- It is important that all counts are done consistently to produce reliable results.
- We would strongly encourage observers to use standard species names.
- **Please** enter correct Transect name and code to avoid misidentification (if you can't remember your Transect name and code please contact the Bird Life Office)

Example of a completed Field Recording Sheet

Name of Compiler	<i>L.Smith</i>			
Transect Name & Code	<i>Acacia Grove</i>	<i>NE124</i>		
District	North East			
Coordinates at start point	-21.42568S & 27.98453E			
Coordinates at end Point	-21.49237S & 27.83249E			
Quarter degree Square (e.g. 2124A2)	2127B2			
Visit Date (DD:MM:YY)	10/02/2013			
Telephone Number	+267- *****			
Email Address	*****@gmail.com			
Number of Observers	2			
Names of Other Observers	D.Smith & L.Josephs			
Weather (1,2 or 3)	Cloud	Rain	Wind	Visibility
	2	1	3	1
Habitat Type No. (see chart below)	4 – Acacia woodland			

Time At Each Start Point Along 2km Transect (24hr Clock)										
Point 1	Point 2	Point 3	Point 4	Point 5	Point 6	Point 7	Point 8	Point 9	Point 10	Point 11
6:30	6:38	6:45	6:54	7:03	7:10	7:18	7:27	7:35	7:43	7:51

	Species Name	Number of Individuals at Each Point											Total Count
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
1	Cape Turtle Dove	5	3		2	1			7	3	4		25
2	Cape Glossy Starling	1		4		2	1				3		11

Habitat Information

- Arid Kalahari Savannah*: -Dry areas with sparse stunted shrubveld on a sandy soil. (South West Botswana)
- Kalahari Tree/Bush Savannah*: - Clear bush and tree development on a sandy soil. Most vegetation grows to a medium height. (South East and Central Botswana)
- Acacia Tree Savannah*: - Areas with mainly Acacia tree species. Sparsely spread and short in height. (South East Botswana mainly below Lobatse)
- Acacia Woodland*: - Large numbers of mature Acacia species interspersed with small bushes on clay based soil. (South East Botswana – From Lobatse to Mahalapye)
- Close Tree savannah on Rocky Hills*: - Mixed thornveld spread in and around rocky outcrops. (East Botswana around Palapye)
- Mopane Tree/Bush Savannah*: - Areas dominated by large Mopane trees and well developed bushveld. (North and North East of Botswana)
- Broadleaf Woodland*: - Mix of mature, close growing Mopane, Acacia and other Hardwood tree species. (East Botswana)
- Broadleaf Woodland and Grassland*: - As description above but also interspersed with areas of open grasslands. (North Botswana above the Okavango Delta)

9. *Grassland*: - Large open plains with mostly grass species present. (North and North East Botswana, mainly in the Makgadikgadi areas)

10. *Palm Savannah*: - Found in humid, average rainfall areas. Dominated by palm tree species. (North of Makgadikgadi Pans)

Recording potential threats to your site

At the end of the Recording Sheet is a section where you may use your general local knowledge of the site and/or area to provide information on any potential threats (both current or future) to the habitat and/or birds around your transect. This simple, but essential information will allow us to assess how the site is doing, what problems (if any) affect it and what is, or can be done to tackle the problem. If you are able and wish to provide information in addition to that provided here, please contact the BirdLife Botswana IBA Project Coordinator at the address below, who can send you a more detailed form.

Return of data

Please return all completed forms **promptly** to the Bird Life Botswana office by the end of March for the February counts and by the end of December for the November counts. Forms received after this date will not be included in the report. Forms can be handed in at the BLB branches or sent electronically to education@birdlifebotswana.org.bw and copied to blb@birdlifebotswana.org.bw, or by post (see contact details below). Once we have received your completed forms, you will receive an acknowledgement from BirdLife Botswana.

If you have any queries about BPMP please contact either your BirdLife Botswana Regional Representative or the BPM Programme Coordinator at Bird Life Botswana, P O Box 26691, Game City, Gaborone, Botswana, Tel/Fax: +267 319 0540/1, Email: blb@birdlifebotswana.org.bw or visit our website: www.birdlifebotswana.org.bw

BirdLife Botswana Branches & Regional Representatives

Maun: - Pete Hancock, P.O. Box 1529, Maun, Botswana, Tel. 6865618, birdlifemaun@botsnet.bw

Kasane: - Phil Zappala, phil@sgsafrica.com

Ghanzi: - Kevin Grant, tiisakalahari@gmail.com

Jwaneng: - Jerusalem Mooketsi, jmooketsi@debswana.bw

Francistown: - Dr Zsolt Gido, gidozso@yahoo.com

Many thanks for helping with this important project and enjoy your counting!

The Bird Population Monitoring Scheme is organised and coordinated by BirdLife Botswana in partnership with the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP), the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) and is financially supported by the Global Environment Facility/Small Grant Programme, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB, the BirdLife International partner in UK).