

Bird Population Monitoring Programme Month is Approaching! *Time for the November 2011 Count – Are we all Ready?*

As we approach the Bird Population Monitoring Programme (BPM) counting month which is November 2011, it is ideal to share with the BPM surveyors the programme progress since the last count in February 2011. We all agree that it has been a long break for us and now it is time to reassemble our teams to get ready for this exciting little exercise-as it is called by many of you. We are also calling out to our local representatives from all branches (Kasane, Maun, Francistown, Jwaneng, Gantsi, and Serowe) to continue with that good and hard work of coordinating and supporting participants to undertake counts in their areas during the counting time.

We all know that, since the establishment of the BPM in 2010, there have been two counts undertaken, one in November 2010 and the other one in February 2011. As a result of the shortfalls encountered in the two counts, BirdLife Botswana has conducted 11 half day BPM training workshops throughout the country from 27th June to 2nd August 2011 at various places to overcome the challenges existing within the programme. The aim of the training workshops was to overcome the challenge of bias of counters near the cities and towns and poor coverage in remote areas that currently exists within the programme. The objectives of the workshops were to introduce and publicise the BPM programme, to recruit new participants and to give feedback to those who took part through sharing progress and challenges of the BPM programme.



BPM Training workshop at Gantsi facilitated by Kevin Grant

The training workshops were held at Zutshwa settlement, Gantsi, Maun, Gumare, Shakawe, Serowe, Mokobile village, Central Kalagadi Game Reserve (CKGR) - Matswere Gate, Francistown, Tuli Safari Lodge and Mathathane village. These workshops were placed targeting the areas that were poorly or not at all represented within the country. There were a total of 270 participants trained on the BPM programme. The workshop participants were from DWNP, DEA, Community Based Organisation (CBOs), lodges, safari companies, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and teachers. The workshops were hosted in conjunction with the Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) and the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA). Of note, the DWNP organised the workshops, provided free workshop venues with facilities and most importantly facilitated the attendance of the Community Based Organisations (CBOs) at the workshops. These were the second series of the BPM training workshops since the project

commencement, following the ones undertaken from 15th July to 2nd August 2010 at Gantsi, Maun, Kasane, Francistown, Gaborone and Jwaneng that trained 145 people.



Participants on a BPM methodology practical at Zutshwa

What transpired from the workshops was that the BPM training and aiding materials should be prepared in local language. The majority of the participants felt that local communities should be empowered to actively take part on the BPM monitoring programme. There was a positive response about the BPM programme from the participants, as they found the programme very interesting and viewed it as an important initiative to take part in.



Zutshwa attendants

Lastly we hope that out of the 270 trained people at least 160 will respond positively and be part of the upcoming November 2011 count. ***We are also appealing to all surveyors to make sure that they repeat their previous transects. Remember we all want to track changes and determine bird population trends over time.*** This can only be achieved when there is no missing data from any of the transects undertaken. Please, if any of you know friends who could potentially be part of the scheme, recruit them on our behalf. If you have any queries, please phone BirdLife office at 3190540. With all your support, it would be nice if we could have 260

counters covering 200 transects across the country during the November 2011 count. We are the BPM leaders in Africa, after all.

Acknowledgements

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Photographs by Ian White