

## FACT SHEET – Black-winged Pratincole

Like other pratincoles, the Black-winged is a strong flier, and migrates annually to spend the austral summer in Southern Africa. This helps it escape the vagaries of the northern winter, and some of the threats that have resulted in its population declining dramatically in recent decades. An international Black-winged Pratincole Action Plan, a blueprint for the survival of this globally threatened species, has been compiled with the involvement of conservationists from most of the range states, and it is clear that most of the highly relevant threats to this species lie in the northern breeding grounds.



Photo: W T arboton

The most important human-related threats are disturbance, especially when breeding, and destruction of nests by cattle. Clearly these threats cannot be addressed in Botswana where the Black-winged Pratincole overwinters; however, it is vital to ensure that the environment it encounters here is safe. Since it feeds mainly on insects, this means that it needs a pesticide-free environment. It would also help if it were listed as a protected species under the Wildlife Conservation and National Parks Act.

A constructive approach to conserving this species in Botswana would be to develop and implement a National Action Plan based on the International Plan. We need to know more about its ecological requirements when it is in Botswana. For example, in 1989, Penry and T arboton recorded over 10,000 Black-winged Pratincoles at Lake Ngami (currently the world population is unlikely to exceed 10,000 – 15,000 pairs) – why was there such a large aggregation at that time, and how important is Lake Ngami for the species? What other areas are important? It is only by recording all observations of the species that we will gain a better insight into how we can contribute to its survival.

