Is sustainable development an oxymoron?
Conservation and sustainable development are, in essence, about balancing human populations with natural resources. However, it seems as though human numbers are rapidly outstripping the capacity of the earth to support them. At every turn, compromises are made to benefit people (in the short term) at the expense of our natural resources capital.

In Botswana, the original national objective of sustained development has become transformed into sustainable development, and now this concept is being firmly entrenched on the political agenda following the Summit for Sustainability. Read about this exciting initiative on the opposite page. It may just be that sustainable development is an achievable reality!

Pete Hancock
(Editor)
On 24th and 25th May, His Excellency President Ian Khama and high-level representatives of other African countries met in Gaborone to draft and ratify a Declaration on Sustainability in Africa. They were supported by another 40 ‘heavyweights’ from organisations such as Coca-Cola, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Wal-Mart, UNEP, Conservation International, World Bank, MacArthur Foundation, IUCN, FAO and many others — the list of participants reads like Who’s who in conservation and development.

The task they had set themselves was formidable, especially in view of the time constraint; to pin down that oxymoron "sustainable development".

The signatories undertook “to ensure that the contributions of natural capital to sustainable economic growth, maintenance and improvement of social capital and human well-being are quantified and integrated into development and business practice”.

This objective will be achieved through:

1. integrating the value of natural capital into national accounting and corporate planning and reporting processes, policies and programmes in agreed efforts;
2. building social capital and reducing poverty by transitioning agriculture, extractive industries, fisheries and other natural capital uses and practices that promote sustainable employment, food security, sustainable energy and the protection of natural capital through protected areas and other mechanisms;
3. ecosystem restoration measures, as well as actions that mitigate stresses on natural capital;
4. building the knowledge, data, capacity and policy networks to promote leadership and new models in the field of sustainable development, and to increase momentum for positive change; and
5. effective communication and public education.

This focussed objective and associated action plan should go a long way towards addressing the ‘malaise of Africa’ as described by Moeletsi Mbeki in his thought-provoking book ‘Architects of Poverty’; his contention is that the elites in many African countries are using natural resources unsustainably to enrich themselves and placate the masses with no regard for building sustainable employment or wealth generation.

The Declaration ends with an invitation to other nations “to endorse the Gaborone Declaration and join in these initiatives”. The adoption of the Gaborone Declaration by a wide range of African leaders will be a coup in terms of mainstreaming conservation into political agendas. Although the Declaration makes for dry reading, it is one of the most important documents to be produced in recent years.

President Khama and colleagues at Conservation International (the organisers) are to be congratulated on this far-sighted initiative.

The details of the complete Declaration can be accessed at the link provided at the foot of this page.

Read the whole text of the declaration at www.conservation.org/conferences/Pages/Summit-for-Sustainability-in-Africa-Botswana-2012.aspx
The Red List for birds is a useful tool for assigning priority conservation action and funding, focusing attention as it does on species faced with possible extinction. At the same time, it is an indictment—it is always becoming longer and this shows that generally our conservation efforts are not being effective. Sure, there have been some successes, and it is encouraging to note for example, that the Lesser Kestrel and the Corn Crake have both been removed to the Least Concern category.

In 2000, when BirdLife first published “Threatened Birds of the World”, there were only 11 birds listed for Botswana; in slightly over a decade, this has inexorably grown to 31. There are now six Endangered species, nine Vulnerable and 16 Near Threatened species (see table on page 5 for details). The 2012 list is really bleak; what is especially disconcerting is that the White-backed and Hooded vultures have jumped up to the Endangered category. This is disturbing for at least two reasons:

Firstly, all five major vulture species found in Botswana are now candidates for extinction if current trends continue (the other two, the Egyptian and Palm-nut vultures are both vagrants to Botswana); Secondly, we can no longer say that these species were listed due to declines elsewhere in their range; we know that vultures are under serious threat in Botswana due to poisoning. This is a tough but not insurmountable issue to tackle, and happily, due to funding from LUSH’s Charity Pot Fund, we are now embarking on an advocacy strategy to address this aspect.

The Grey Crowned Crane has also moved up to the Endangered category, due mainly to declines caused by illegal trade elsewhere within its range in Africa. Cranes are
another vulnerable group of birds, with all three species found in Botswana being listed in high threat categories.

The addition of the Crowned Eagle to the Near Threatened category hardly comes as a surprise—it is a specialist hunter of primates in forested areas, and forests are under threat everywhere. Botswana does not have much suitable habitat for this species, which is regarded as a Category A Rarity (there are less than 10 accepted records).

Let’s see some concerted action across the BirdLife partnership to reverse this negative trend, and shorten the Red List! We can do it!

**Botswana’s globally threatened birds 2012**

**Endangered Species**
- Egyptian Vulture
- Basra Reed-warbler
- Grey Crowned Crane
- Ludwig’s Bustard

**Vulnerable Species**
- Slaty Egret
- Blue Crane
- Secretarybird
- Lappet-faced Vulture
- Southern Ground-Hornbill

**Near Threatened Species**
- Lesser Flamingo
- Denham’s Bustard
- African Skimmer
- Great Snipe
- Maccoa Duck
- European Roller
- Black-tailed Godwit
- Bateleur

**White-backed Vulture**

There are now 31 globally threatened bird species in Botswana, up from 11 in 2000.

The listing of the White-backed Vulture as Endangered is most disappointing (Photo: Pete Hancock)
CHANGING VALUES

Recently poachers operating in the Kwando area of northern Botswana shot an elephant, laced the carcase with poison to kill any vultures which could reveal their illegal activities, shot another elephant and then disappeared. Close to 200 vultures died at the site, but not before alerting the APU and BDF to the disaster—this is the largest number of birds killed in a single incident in Botswana to date. This rates as a disaster of international proportions in view of the status of these birds as Endangered (see article on pages 3 and 4).

This incident has caused BirdLife Botswana to rethink its strategy for preventing the poisoning of vultures— it is now patently obvious that the ‘soft’ approach of education and awareness alone will not preclude such a catastrophe from recurring. When people set out to deliberately kill indiscriminately large numbers of globally threatened birds, the only way to stop them is to ensure that they do not have easy access to the poisons used.

At present, BirdLife Botswana is undertaking a project to prevent the poisoning of vultures in the country, with the financial assistance of LUSH Charity Pot in the UK. This is being done in partnership with the DWNP, and the strategy is currently under review. While it is important to continue to monitor the situation, it is more useful to undertake targeted action aimed at restricting the availability and use of the poisons. It is also apparent that this issue must be tackled on a Pan African scale as agreed at the Pan African Vulture Summit (see article on page 14).

While it is unrealistic to compare vultures with elephants, one wonders what the reaction would have been if 170 elephants had been killed?

Poached Elephant (Photo: M Fay)
The BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat, in conjunction with BirdLife International, hosted a training of trainers workshop on Policy and Advocacy from 24th to 27th June, 2012 in Nairobi, Kenya. The workshop was funded by the Spanish Agency for International Development (AECID). Thirteen different BirdLife partners participated in the training session; these were from Botswana, Burundi, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. BirdLife Botswana was represented by Virat Kootsositse.

The course was facilitated by Sacha Cleminson from RSPB, Serah Munguti from Nature Kenya, Melanie Heath from BirdLife Global Secretariat, Ken Mwathe from BirdLife Africa Secretariat, Rob Munroe from BirdLife Global Secretariat and Carolyn Ah Shene-Verdoorn from BirdLife South Africa. There were guest speakers from UNEP, Kenya Wildlife Service, Office of the Prime Minister of Kenya, and Kenya’s Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources. This is the first ever training on Policy and Advocacy to be offered to the BirdLife Africa partnership.

The training was intense and started with case studies from the East African region. The main emphases of these studies were on advocacy strategies. Participants were taken through the theory and practice of advocacy and the policy process. Details of policy frameworks for different countries, formulations, and national policy revision were considered using Kenya as a case study. There were huge lessons drawn from building policy and advocacy components into projects.

Virat Kootsositse

BirdLife Africa Secretariat offered the first Policy and Advocacy training in Kenya recently.

Participants in the Policy and Advocacy Training Workshop In Kenya (Photo BirdLife Africa Secretariat)
Diderick Cuckoo (Photo: I White)

Greater Blue-eared Starling (Photo: L Francey)
The CMS and AEWA

The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) is an international treaty which recognises that migratory species transcend national boundaries and can only be adequately protected if nations work together. AEWA, the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement is a multi-country environmental agreement under the CMS targeting migratory waterfowl. The question is “Should Botswana become a party to this agreement, particularly AEWA?”

There are a number of reasons why BirdLife Botswana would like to see the country acceding to AEWA. First and foremost is the recognition that many of our Palaearctic migrants use the African-Eurasian flyway, which is mirrored in the map opposite which shows the target AEWA countries. The BirdLife Partnership generally subscribes to flyway conservation, and it makes sense to co-operate and integrate our efforts with similar initiatives. Migratory birds can only be effectively conserved by trans-national efforts.

Secondly AEWA, which covers 255 species of waterbirds, is directly relevant to our conservation efforts which are focussed on globally threatened birds such as the Slaty Egret, Wattled Crane, flamingos and others. As is the case with BirdLife, AEWA advocates for the participatory development and implementation of Species Action Plans as blueprints for the conservation of globally threatened waterbirds (see for example the Slaty Egret Action Plan developed in Maun in 2010 jointly by BirdLife Botswana and AEWA). We also already engage with AEWA through celebrating World Migratory Bird Day every year.

Thirdly, AEWA is gathering momentum and of the 119 range states, 65 countries and the European Union have become contracting parties. In southern Africa, South Africa and Zimbabwe have already joined, and Botswana — in the centre of the southern African plateau with internationally important wetlands — occupies a key position in the region.

Finally, as always, part of the motivation for joining could be financial — funds are made available for undertaking the implementation of the agreement i.e. for the conservation of waterbirds.

In summary, BirdLife Botswana believes that there are compelling reasons for Botswana to join the CMS and AEWA.

For more info, see www.unep-aewa.org

Lake Ngami is a vitally important stop-over for migratory birds (Photo: Pete Hancock)
Of the 119 range states, 65 and the European Union have become contracting parties.

Botswana’s submission to have the Okavango Delta listed as a World Heritage Site is still under review. We are expecting a technical team from IUCN (the World Conservation Union) to visit the Delta soon on behalf of the World Heritage Convention in order to verify the facts submitted by the Botswana team. The review process is quite lengthy, and it looks as though we’ll only hear the final outcome early in 2013. In the meantime, the thousands of tourists visiting the Delta are inadvertently confirming its status as an internationally important site.
LAKE NGAMI PILUMP

Conservation is full of acronyms, and here is another to add to your ‘vocabulary’ - a PILUMP is a Participatory Integrated Land Use Management Plan!

BirdLife Botswana recently took part in the Lake Ngami PILUMP facilitated by colleagues from SAREP (another acronym, standing for Southern African Regional Environmental Program!).

It is BirdLife Botswana’s firm belief that Lake Ngami requires a high level of protection, not just for the sake of the birds themselves, but as a national asset. We have been working with the DWNP to get the area gazetted as a bird sanctuary in order to ensure that it is protected so that any future developments are in line with this status.

However, we know that gazettlement of the site is just the first step towards its protection — a management plan is another vital component in the process of ensuring that the area is developed in the proper way. Avitourism in Botswana has hardly been explored to date, and Lake Ngami has the potential to become Botswana’s premier birding tourism destination if developed sensitively. The area is not suitable for mass tourism or recreation such as has been happening in an unplanned fashion over the past few years (witness the wholesale desertion of breeding sites by waterbirds); rather tourism should be pitched at offering a high quality birding experience for the upper end of the market. This view needs to be incorporated in the management plan to ensure that the dual goals of conservation and livelihoods improvement are achieved.

The management plan will not be finished overnight — only the first consultative workshop has taken place. Once the first draft has been produced, based on the inputs of participants, there will be follow-up meetings moving the process along towards a plan that represents a balanced best option for the area. BirdLife Botswana will be active in these developments to ensure that this IBA receives the attention it deserves.

“Lake Ngami is a national asset; a management plan is an important component of its development”

Lake Ngami: birding spectacle (Photo: Ken and Mel Oake)
BirdLife Botswana supports the formation of the Raptor Working Group, under the direction and guidance of raptor expert Johan van Jaarsveld. The Group aims to contribute to the conservation of raptors throughout the country by gathering and disseminating information on their status. The Group will also be involved in training and capacity-building, and will be identifying projects and assisting Batswana students to undertake raptor research for higher degrees.

This is a timely development in view of the fact that all our vultures are under threat, as well as other large raptors such as the Martial Eagle, the Bateleur, the Crowned Eagle, and Secretarybird, and smaller birds of prey such as the Red-footed Falcon and Black Harrier.

The Working Group is open to people who are prepared to become actively involved in the conservation of raptors. In Botswana, many birds of prey are still found outside protected areas on tribal land, and farmers and other people have a positive role to play in ensuring the future of these populations.

For further details, contact Johan van Jaarsveld at mobile 75259162 or e-mail mogotho@yahoo.com or contact Pete Hancock from BirdLife Botswana (see contact details at end of the newsletter).
The BirdLife partners in Africa meet every 18 months or so in a forum called the Council for Africa Partnership (CAP) to decide on policy and priorities for the Partnership. This year’s meeting was held in Nairobi, Kenya, and BirdLife Botswana was represented by the Director, Dr Kabelo Senyatso.

A major agenda item was the BirdLife Africa Strategy for the period 2013 to 2017, leading on from an evaluation of the effectiveness of BirdLife activities in Africa. New Council members were elected, with Mark Anderson from BirdLife South Africa being chosen as Chairperson, and Kabelo Senyatso as Vice-chair. Kabelo Senyatso was also appointed as Chair of the Africa Policy and Advocacy Working Group.

Due to the plight of vultures throughout Africa, and the fact that many of the threats faced by the birds are either of a transboundary nature, or are similar in many countries, a Pan African Vulture Summit was held in Kenya from 16 to 20 April this year.

During the summit, delegates from Africa and beyond assessed the current status and trends of vultures in Africa today, and developed the components of a Pan African Conservation Strategy for Vultures.

The meeting was organised under the auspices of the IUCN Vulture Specialist Group by the Endangered Wildlife Trust and the Peregrine Fund, with the US Fish and Wildlife Service providing the necessary funding.

For more information about the workshop outcomes, contact Kariuki Ndanganga at the BirdLife Africa Secretariat in Nairobi.
Membership Form

Membership is due in January of each year, as the subscription runs from January to December.

Rates
- Standard - P120.00
- Corporate - P2000
- Professional - Rangers, Guides and SSG members - P60.00
- Life - P2000
- Students studying in Botswana - P15
- Schools/Clubs - P50 plus P5 per club member with a minimum of 10 members per club
- SADC Region - P350
- Overseas (and outside SADC) - P450

The following details are required:
I/We/Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms:______________________
wish to become members of BirdLife Botswana
Address:_________________________________
________________________________________
Home/Cell Phone:_________________________
Work phone:______________________________
Email (please PRINT):______________________

I acknowledge that my family dependents, invitees and I take part in the BirdLife Botswana organised events entirely at our own risk. I, in my personal capacity and as representative of my spouse, children, dependents, and invitees hereby keep BirdLife Botswana, its committee, members and agents indemnified and hold them harmless against all loss, injury, or damage to person or property from any cause (including negligence) arising as a result of our participation in events organised by BirdLife Botswana.

Signed_________________________
Date:__________________________

Please make your cheque payable to 'BirdLife Botswana' or Electronic Funds Transfer to First National Bank Botswana, Kgale View 284567, Account # 57110052562, Swift FIRNBWGX

Please return, fax or mail this form with your subscription and payment details:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Secretary</th>
<th>Pete Hancock</th>
<th>Mike Soroczynski</th>
<th>Phil Zappala</th>
<th>Jerusalem Mooketsi</th>
<th>Kevin Grant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BirdLife Botswana</td>
<td>PO Box 20463</td>
<td>PO Box 425</td>
<td>PO Box 570</td>
<td>PO Box 1723</td>
<td>PO Box 820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO Box 26691</td>
<td>Maun</td>
<td>Francistown</td>
<td>Kasane</td>
<td>Jwaneng</td>
<td>Ghanzi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Game City</td>
<td>or phone Pete to</td>
<td>or phone Mike to</td>
<td>or phone Phil</td>
<td>or phone Jerusalem</td>
<td>or phone Kevin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaborone</td>
<td>or phone Pete to</td>
<td>or phone Mike to</td>
<td>or phone Phil</td>
<td>or phone Jerusalem</td>
<td>or phone Kevin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>collect 74654464</td>
<td>collect 2977133</td>
<td>75186109</td>
<td>to collect 71392738</td>
<td>72112297</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A picture is worth a thousand words. BirdLife Botswana member, Ken Oake took this photo of part of the abandoned pelican breeding colony at Lake Xau in June this year. Over 500 birds were nesting here until a thoughtless lawbreaker shot some of the nesting birds right at the breeding colony. He not only killed a few of the protected birds—he destroyed the whole colony and hundreds of eggs were abandoned. The few chicks that had just hatched subsequently died too.

**BIRDLIFE BOTSWANA MISSION**

BirdLife Botswana aims to conserve birds and important bird habitats, by creating awareness, carrying out research and promoting beneficial relationships between birds and people.