



EAST ATLANTIC FLYWAY INITIATIVE (EAFI) – southern Africa





WHAT IS THE EAST ATLANTIC FLYWAY?

Each year millions of shorebirds and landbirds migrate from their northern breeding grounds in Eurasia to wintering areas in western and southern Africa. Many of these birds travel thousands of kilometres along the flyway and rely on a series of high quality coastal and inland sites as stop over points to feed and rest. The East Atlantic Flyway (EAF) is the network of stop over sites used each year by these migrating birds. Many of these coastal and inland terrestrial stop over sites are also important for humans by providing resources, livelihoods and economic development. Unfortunately, due to numerous threats, many of the bird populations in this flyway are in decline.

KEY THREATS TO THE EAF

The sites along the EAF are threatened by habitat loss and degradation as a result of urbanization, infrastructure development, agricultural expansion, alien species, overexploitation of resources, over-extraction of water, pollution, negative impacts of recreational and tourism activities and climate change.

THE INTERVENTION

Birds do not recognise international boundaries. Any attempts to conserve birds in southern Africa may be in vein if those same birds, whilst undertaking annual migration or even local movements, fall foul of the plethora of threats facing this group along its long migration route. As such, conservation measures along the entire flyway are important to secure a network of sites necessary for the protection of these migratory birds.

The BirdLife partnership has established the East Atlantic Flyway Initiative (EAFI) to facilitate the monitoring of birds and sites, identify conservation priorities and increase capacity for conservation along the Flyway. Collaboration with country partners and organizations working along the flyway is key to the implementation of successful conservation initiatives to address the key threats facing biodiversity and landscapes. BirdLife South Africa's EAFI Project Manager will assist in the southern African region, with the identification of threats to priority bird species and sites along the flyway, the delineation of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), safeguarding of these sites and fundraising for priority projects along the East Atlantic Flyway.

KEY OBJECTIVES FOR THE EAST ATLANTIC FLYWAY INITIATIVE

- Engage key stakeholders and country-based partners to clearly understand the existing capacity and projects, as well as opportunities and areas to enhance biodiversity information, which can be used to inform government and development decision-making and reporting.
- Partner with, and support countries, in understanding and reporting their biodiversity, through strengthening technical capacity, through training of country-based officials to enable them to:
 - ✓ Improve the knowledge of the key threats for species along the flyway, as well as the appropriate conservation actions required to reduce these threats. Threats facing waterbirds, as well as the conservation interventions required, are relatively well known, but for land-birds, more data is needed. Establish species monitoring and research of threatened and common bird species to better understand trends of, and threats to, these species. If the impact of these threats are reduced, the resilience of populations along the flyway can improve
 - ✓ Improve the conservation and management of important sites and habitats for migratory birds. Identify and delineate Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), which are sites that contribute to the global persistence of biodiversity through a highly inclusive, consultative and bottom-up approach. Support will be provided to establish KBA National Coordination Groups (NCGs) and training in the application of the KBA Global Standard will be provided.

- ✓ Develop and customise a methodology to identify, assess and recognize 'Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs)'. OECMs is a conservation designation for areas that are achieving effective in-situ conservation of biodiversity outside of protected areas. OECMs can expand the network of protected and conserved areas, by safeguarding important areas (such as KBAs).
- ✓ Influence policy on a national, regional and global level and support partners in their own countries to ensure better protection for migratory species.
- Jointly with country-based partners, aim to raise funding required to achieve these objectives.
- Promote the work of the Flyway and demonstrate the value of coordination of actions across the Flyway.

BENEFITS TO COUNTRIES

- Ensure countries have a baseline to monitor trends in changes in biodiversity, through the red listing of threatened species and ecosystems.
- Training and support in implementing of global standards and frameworks to achieve area-based conservation outcomes.
- Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), if recognized in national policy can support national conservation and development planning. It allows countries to invest resources in conservation initiatives in the most important sites, as well as avoid development in globally important sites.
- Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) may significantly add to countries conservation areas networks, therefore increasing the global achievement towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
- Improved regional cooperation and transnational biodiversity conservation through effective implementation of a flyway conservation strategy.
- By ensuring that species, sites and ecosystems are prioritized and safeguarded, countries will be able to access international biodiversity funding opportunities.

CONTACT

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