



Conservation Society of Sierra Leone

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Community water bird Training Workshop at Tissana from 9th-11th January 2014

Five communities in the Satia section of Yawri were trained in water bird identification, habitat monitoring and the use of equipment like binocular, Telescope and field guide. 18 people were registered for the training from the five villages from the 9th to the 11th January 2014. The training was host in Tissana village community center which was not far from the wetland site.

During the opening day of the programme, a prayer was offered in the Islamic and Christian way. After that, the coordinator of the programme Mr. Papanie Bai-Sesay, explained the purpose of the training and why the flyways and habitat of the migratory birds need to be protected and how it going to benefit the communities along these areas. He told the people that people are desperate to know how these birds feed, where they go, where they breed and how they are protected in different part along the flyway.

Each year in January Wetland International, WaddenSea Flyway Initiative and Birdlife International support countries along the flyway to carryout waterbird monitory to the trend of birds visiting each country and also monitor the threat level at each site. He highlighted the benefit to the community people if these birds and their habitat are protected. Question were asked if they will form a conservation group and the answer was positive. Protecting migratory birds is a shared responsibility to all partners including communities like this. Some of the benefits if the site is well manage are;

- Many people will be visiting these communities because of the birds.
- Their local products will generate good income for them.
- Their communities will open to development.
- Investors will build hotels, motel, big business etc
- Employment for the young people etc

The community people were happy to hear these benefits and they thank the coordinator for these insights and opportunities they will get if they stop killing birds, collecting eggs of birds and help in protecting the habitat of the birds. He admonishes them to take example to No. 2 River community, which is a community base tourism center. He also told them that No. 2 River is one of the best tourism center around Freetown that is managed by local community. He urged them not to destroy the habitats of the birds but to see birds as their friends.

Mr Kamara, the town chief of Tissera expressed his view on the whole project and thanks the coordinator for his great interest in their communities. He also said the conservation society of Sierra Leone should not forget the community because they did not have any idea on Tourism and conservation of birds and the importance of birds to people in the community. He also expresses interest for future workshop on a broader way by involving more community people on different topics on migratory bird's conservation, to increase their knowledge on birds and their importance. Most people in these communities like to be part of this training but because of limited funds we are able to train just 18 people.

He thanks the programme coordinator and appreciation for the intervention of CSSL, the Wadden Sea and everybody that came with the coordinator. The community elders and youths appreciated the training and expected that this is an opportunity for them to involve in bird conservation and hence create job opportunities for their youths. They are expecting CSSL to continue with the project which will help to expose their site to the international world of conservation. They are expecting more coordination and collaboration with the CSSL in project development and implementation.

Participants were trained on birds identification, water bird monitoring and how to use basic equipment for bird watching like binocular, telescope and field guide.

After lunch the Biodiversity officer told the community about the benefits of keeping the habitat of birds healthy and admonish them to keep to their promise and CSSL will try to develop some proposals that will keep them moving.

The beneficiaries brought up a word and said they will take these ideas to the communities they came from and explained to the importance of birds and their habitat.

The facilitator Mr Momoh B Sesay took participants on a field work, and participants were able to identify different types of water birds. The species they identified are; Whimbrel, common sand piper, intermediate egret, Western reef egret, pink-back pelican, Common ringed plover, Sacred ibis, Gray plover, Eurasian Curlew and Little Stint. Participants were trained how to fill in the bird form, Wetland forms and Birdlife form at the end of every field work. Participants were divided into groups and members in each group keep changing to create a friendly working environment to all participants.

Eight of the participants together with counting team were used to count the Satia section of the Yawri Bay during the 2014 simultaneous water bird count. Three out of the eight prove to be very good in identifying the birds. The expert from the United Kingdom advised us to continue the community involvement especially these guys in water bird monitoring and other activities relating to birds at site level.