



**REPÚBLICA DE ANGOLA
MINISTÉRIO DO AMBIENTE
INSTITUTO NACIONAL DA BIODIVERSIDADE E
ÁREAS DE CONSERVAÇÃO**

**RELATORIO DE PARTICIPAÇÃO NA CONTAGEM DAS AVES EM WALVIS BAY PARTICIPATION
REPORT ON COUNTING OF WATERBIRDS IN WALVIS BAY (NAMIBIA)**



Fevereiro, 2016

I. Acknowledgements

Several people and organizations helped to make this project of possible. At first we would like to thank Tim Dodman for his personal involvement, who believed in this exchange trip and who was personally involved in its realisation. The support of the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative (WSFI) was necessary and essential for financial and travel arrangements. Here we address our thanks to Gerold Lüerßen who is coordinating the WSFI at the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat. We also thank the Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Namibia, although our trip had not an official character, but which has provided the means to get in and facilitate all our trips during our stay. Thanks here to the Deputy Director of Scientific Services, Kenneth Uiseb, who provided the time to welcome us and make a small review of the management of migratory birds in Namibia. We can not also forget the support of IOWA, the official contact of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism that has always been with us during our stay. We appreciate the availability of Peter Bridgeford and Holger Kolberg for allowing us to participate in this great bird counting campaign. We can not forget how necessary it was to involve Kaatri Brumfitt, Coordinator of NACOMA, who spoke about coastal management along the Namibian coast.

Anyway, thanks to any person closely or distantly involved making this exchange trip possible.

1. Introduction

The Angolan coast stretches for 1,650 km along the Atlantic Ocean. Along this coast there are several ecosystems, such as mangroves and dune systems, but also a desert area further south of the country, on the border with Namibia. This variety of ecosystems offers a diversity of habitats for various animal species, such as waterfowl. In fact, there are several species of water birds along the Angolan coast that may be residents, as it is the case of species like the white-breasted cormorant (*Phalacrocorax lucidus*), the little egret (*Egretta garzetta*), regional migrants like pelicans and flamingos and Palearctic migratory bird species like common greenshank (*Tringa nebularia*). Taking into account the threats to these resident or migratory waterfowl, efforts are being made to create a protective system for birds along the Angolan coast area. In this context and with the support of the “Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative”, a group of Angolan consisting of three technicians from the National Institute of Biodiversity and Protected Areas (INBAC), a technician from the National Museum of Natural History and a technician from the Instituto Superior de Ciências de Educação do Lubango (ISCED-Lubango) was invited to participate in the counting of birds in Walvis Bay on 30-31 January. The count was organized by the “Coastal Environmental Trust” in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Namibia. Overall, our trip from Luanda to Windhoek went well, but unfortunately our colleague from ISCED-Lubango could not make the trip with us. We arrived in Windhoek on 28 January, where we were greeted by the staff of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Namibia. We spent the next day in Windhoek where we were accompanied by the same team of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism.

After two days of counting, on 1 February, we participated in a small training on coastal management with the assistance of NACOMA (Namibian Coast Conservation and Management), which is a project of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism.

2. Development of activities

2.1. Counting birds

Bird counts were performed over two days, Saturday, January 30 and Sunday 31 January. Before the first day of counting, we received a visit from Peter Bridgeford, who is the coordinator of counting activities. He shared with us the experience of mobilization of participants and the realization of counts sessions in Namibia. He told us a bit about the different groups that would be part of this event. And proposed to include us in one or another group. Finally, it was decided that our team should be integrated in group 4, which had to perform the counts from one point in an area of more than 2 km around to the observed birds. In the second session we were included in group 5 that should conduct the counts using the car.

First session count (January 30)

The gathering of the participants started around 8 am in the Buccaneers Squash Club. We were pleasantly surprised during the "briefing" that preceded the formation of groups. We noticed we were not the only foreigners, but there were also other people from other countries, mainly from Europe. It was around 8:30 am when our group consisting of 10 people moved to our count area (photos 1 and 2). It should be noted that there was a good relationship in the group. While two people were responsible for the identification of the bird species and number of individuals observed, the other members of the group were responsible to carry the counts, all under the coordination of the responsible group.



Foto 1- Group 2 Changing the counting site



Foto 2- Members of the group counting



Foto 4- Three members of the Angolan group and Amanda (voluntary)



Foto 5- Members of the Angolan group with some students

We were amazed by the number of birds, especially flamingos that seemed to extend over the entire coastal zone. Among the most abundant species observed we can highlight the presence of: common tern (*Sterna hirundo*) (Photo 9), the great white pelican (*Pelicanus onocratalus*) (Photo 6), greater flamingo (*Phoenicopterus roseus*) (Photo 8) and the lesser Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus minor*) which can hardly be observed at the Angolan coast. We observed some species whose distribution area does not cover our country like the bank cormorant (*Phalacrocorax neglectus*) (Photo 7) and *Sternula albifrons*.



Foto 6- Great white pelicans and seagulls



Figura 7- bank cormorant



Figura 8- Greater flamingo



Figura 9- Common tern

After several hours of march marked by several stops for the count, emfim reached the last point of observation, where we see a large group of smaller flamingoes. We join the other groups who had already completed their activities. The convivencia was very good with all these people in love with nature and the conservation of aquatic birds. We were able to exchange conversation with several participants, enriching thus our capabilities on the monitoring of birds (Photos 10 and 11).



Foto 10- Convivencia dos grupos



Foto 11- experience exchange with some participants

Second session count (31 January)

On the second day of the count we were already more or less familiar with some participants with whom we live the day before. This time were included in the group 5 which was to count the birds using the car, taking into account the distance between the different points. Peter took us in different points, leaving us to do the counts, but always being near to help us in case of identification doubts of some species, especially esternes that sometimes had doubts. This experience was very interesting, given that we had never worked in such an environment in Angola, but we can do in the future Namibe Province in our country which has the same features (photos 12 and 13).



Foto 12- Displacement of a point to point



Foto 13- Count using the car

The specific diversity was identical to the previous day, but the actual number of each species had changed dramatically. Pinks and lesser flamingos were less abundant, just find a group, on the other hand we see many esternes whose number is close to 4,000 individuals (Photo 15), or the cormorants that came to around 1,000 individuals (Photo 14). Although our focus was the count of birds, we were lucky to observe groups of sea lions (Photo 16) and the "Black-backed Jackal" which is a predator of waterfowl (Photo 17).

As the day before, after several hours of counting, we went to the observatory for the birds to join with the other groups. We were very surprised by the Centre's structure and its functionality. We thought briefly have an identical structure in the various areas of focus of the birds in Angola.



Foto 14- Grupo de Cormoraos



Foto 15- Grupo de Esternas



Foto 16- Grupo d eleoes marinhos



Foto 17- Black-backed Jackal

2.2. Session on the management of the coastline in NACOMA

Work on integrated coastal zone management in Swakopmund made by NACOMA are very interesting to us, given that our country has practically the same challenges. In view of the need for conservation coastal zone, there is a need of riverside populations to practice their activities and economic operators to grow more and more, especially in the hotel industry, building more and more buildings. The Coordinator of NACOMA explained to us as developing efforts to reconcile conservation and sustainable development. In fact, our country has the same challenges. Podriamos inspiration from the Namibian experience to develop similar activities. One of the experiences that we can also inspire us to be protective all Angolan coastal zone as is the case in Namibia.

The Coordinator of NACOMA told us about the management of the "DOROB National Park" which is one of the national parks system of conservation of areas of Namibia. also spoke to us of the species "Damara Tern" which is one of the flagship species of the national park, which has an area of distribution that extends to our parents, but it has several threats to her and their habitat, among other: predation especially the "Black-backed Jackal" and anthropogenic threats, such as the construction and development of the industry that threatens the living space of this species. Emfim to apalparmos the real situation, we were to move on to the "DOROB National Park", mainly in the area of reproduction "Damara Tern" (Photo 18).



Foto 18- O Grupo angolano (from left to right: José Dala, Maria Eugia Lopes, Miguel Xavier e José Dianguessa) e a Coordenadora da NACOMA, Kaatri Brumfitt

3. Stay in Namibia

Apart from Maria Eugenia (Jeni) which has already been in Walvis Bay under other activities, it was the first stay in Namibia for the rest of the group. We enjoyed the trip by car between Windhoek and Walvis Bay, which allowed us to have a little idea about the ecosystems of Namibia. During this journey we cross several small towns, which led us to maintain preserved with some people, which was very interesting to us.

In fact, we visited many interesting places, such as the "National Museum of Namibia" in Windhoek and "National Marine Aquarium of Namibia" in Swakpomund. We were able to visit several other interesting places such as the salt of Walvis bay and see the process of salt production.

4. Conclusion

This exchange of experience was very beneficial and I to our group. The truth when we moved to Namibia, we had some doubts of what could be our contribution or interest in this exchange. Our first meeting with Peter had already shown signs that the experience would be very interesting. In fact, we learned a lot about the organization of the sessions counts and mobilization and management of volunteers and other participants. We also had the opportunity to observe some species whose distribution the area does not reach our country. It is necessary to note the impact of our participation in the training session organized by NACOMA to share with us the Namibian experience on the sustainable management of the Namibian coastal zone. Taking into account the various similarities in terms of the

challenges that our two countries have, we can inspire this experience to develop an integrated management system along the coast anglana. In short, this experience was very profiteer for our group.