

Namibia Coastal/Marine Bird Working Group
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ACTION PLAN FOR NAMIBIA'S COASTAL AND MARINE BIRDS

In order to address the increasing threats to our coastal and marine birdlife, the Namibia Coastal/Marine Bird Action Plan was launched recently at a workshop at Swakopmund. The mission of the plan is to conserve Namibia's coastal and marine birds and their habitats, in partnership with the people who share these environments.

Almost 10% of Namibia's bird species are recognised as being under threat in the new Red Data Book (Simmons & Brown 2006), which goes into press in 2008. Of these, coastal and marine bird species represent 25%, inland wetland birds 32% and birds of prey 30%. The main threats to all of these birds include habitat loss/degradation; poisons; oil and other forms of pollution; over fishing, particularly of pilchards; by-catch in fishing operations; and a lack of environmental awareness and local ownership of biodiversity resources.

The action plan is being implemented by the Namibia Coastal Marine Bird Working Group, a partnership between the Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF); the NACOMA Project; institutions with a conservation mandate (e.g. Ministry of Environment & Tourism, Ministry of Fisheries & Marine Resources and local municipalities); and other civil society groups (e.g. the Coastal Environmental Trust of Namibia, the BirdLife International Albatross Task Force, Namibia Bird Club, Namibian Environment & Wildlife Society, Wetland Working Group); and many individuals in private capacity. The new working group is associated with two related NNF initiatives, namely the Namibia Crane Working Group (for cranes and other inland wetland birds); and Raptors Namibia (for birds of prey).

Among the priority issues identified in the plan are:

1. Poor communication (local, national, regional and international)
2. Lack of information, incomplete data sets
3. Poor awareness/education; ignorance, apathy, negative attitudes
4. Habitat loss due to human disturbance and to unsustainable tourism, recreation, development and harvesting
5. Inadequate legislation/regulations and/or inadequate enforcement
6. Lack of food availability for birds, in part due to overfishing and/or to poor resource management
7. Seabird bycatch by different fisheries; lack of implementation of mitigation measures
8. Lack of/inadequate protocols for disasters
9. Lack of funding/sustainability for conservation initiatives

The proposed actions are to:

1. Promote communication and cooperation
2. Obtain/manage information
3. Promote conservation awareness/education
4. Manage coastal/marine bird populations and habitats by addressing threats
5. Update the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan (NOSCP)
6. Reduce seabird bycatch
7. Develop a seabird rescue/rehabilitation protocol
8. Promote project sustainability

Full list of threatened coastal/marine birds in Namibia
(*also of global concern)

Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross (Endangered)
Black-browed Albatross (Endangered)
Shy Albatross (Near Threatened)
Wandering Albatross (Vulnerable)

*Bank Cormorant (Endangered)
*Cape Cormorant (Near Threatened)
*Crowned Cormorant (Near Threatened)
Greater Flamingo (Vulnerable)
*Lesser Flamingo (Vulnerable)
*Cape Gannet (Endangered)
Black-necked Grebe (Near Threatened)
Hartlaub's Gull (Vulnerable)
*African Black Oystercatcher (Near Threatened)
Great White Pelican (Vulnerable)
*African Penguin (Endangered)
Northern Giant-Petrel (Near Threatened)
White-chinned Petrel (Vulnerable)
Chestnut-banded Plover (Near Threatened)
Caspian Tern (Vulnerable)
Damara Tern (Near Threatened; breeding endemic)

Please contact the Namibia Coastal/Marine Bird Working Group (email ecoserve@iway.na) if you would like a copy of the workshop proceedings, further details of the action plan or to be placed on the mailing list for the newsletter (Namibia Coastal/Marine Bird News).

Media inquiries

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