



NamPower/NNF Strategic Partnership



Media release: 7 September 2009 Progress with addressing power line/wildlife conflicts

The NamPower/Namibia Nature Foundation (NNF) Strategic Partnership has launched a country-wide series of half-day workshops which will focus on promoting awareness and gathering information on power line/wildlife incidents in Namibia. Established in October 2008 in order to address power line/wildlife conflicts in Namibia, the partnership is funded by the European Investment Bank and aims to become financially sustainable after three years.

The series of workshops follows the initial technical training workshop held for NamPower and Regional Electricity Distribution (RED) staff in Windhoek on 30 June 2009. At these workshops, guidelines will be provided on identifying and reporting important information through the utilization of a standardized incidents reporting form. In addition, participants will gain insight into the identification of relevant bird species; technical aspects such as GPS operation and photography; sensitive environmental features; different power line structures/designs and their possible impacts on wildlife and vice versa; and the types of mitigation measures.

The target audience identified to attend the workshops comprises staff from NamPower and REDs, and landowners and managers that have power lines/structures on their properties (e.g. farmers, conservancies, the Ministry of Wildlife and Tourism, as well as other institutions). Workshops will be held at Tsumeb on 22 September; Otjiwarongo on 23 September; Windhoek on 20 October; Walvis Bay on 22 October; and Keetmanshoop on 17 November. Should there be a need to conduct additional workshops, this can be arranged. Persons interested in attending one of these training workshops are invited to contact the project managers or NamPower (see details below).

Almost 10% of Namibia's 676 bird species are under threat. The extent of mortality caused to wildlife, especially birds, by power lines is unknown but expected to be greater than records indicate. Recently, power line incidents involving the mortality of a Black-chested Snake Eagle and the injury of a Martial Eagle (an *Endangered* species) were reported in the Windhoek area by the Namibia Animal Rehabilitation Research and Education Centre (NARREC). On the other hand, inconvenient power outages caused by wildlife electrocutions and/or collisions may result in blackouts, with high maintenance and repair costs. Both types of impact are cause for concern; both are preventable or could be reduced with appropriate planning and mitigation. An action plan was therefore launched in 2008, with the objectives of promoting awareness/communication about the risks that power lines pose to birds, and birds to power lines; reporting, monitoring and investigating power line/bird mortality incidents; and incorporating bird/wildlife mitigation into the planning of future power line networks.

A dynamic, integrated Environmental Information Service (EIS) has been developed that will serve as a free, accessible, useful 'one-stop-shop' for public environmental information in Namibia. The initial work has focused on assessing and incorporating data such as the Atlas of Namibia, Bird Atlas, CONINFO and NamPower, and the creation of links to other established sources of data. The EIS has recently gone online (www.nnf.org.na/EIS) and is available as a proactive planning tool to both NamPower and environmentalists in general. As part of the EIS, Namibia's Raptor Road Count project has been given a boost to enable the continuation of data entry and analysis/generation of summary statistics for two more years. From 1973-2000 and 2005-2006 this popular public participation project has collected a substantial quantity of data on raptor distribution, numbers, breeding and other aspects.

The public is invited to participate in the NamPower/NNF Strategic Partnership Project by promoting awareness and involving stakeholders at any level; reporting and recording wildlife-power line incidents; and contributing to the Environmental Information (EIS) database. Kindly contact the project managers (Mike & Ann Scott, tel. 063 683 026; email enviro.inform@gmail.com / ecoserve@iway.na) or NamPower (Danie Louw, tel. 061 322 2089; email Danie.Louw@nampower.com.na). For the EIS, please contact Alice Jarvis & Tony Robertson (email tr_aj@mweb.com.na). Project website: www.nnf.org.na/nampowerproject.htm.

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