

Project Update: April 2013

Community outreach and conservation education in Busia

The project team rolled out a sensitisation activity for blue swallow conservation in Busia Grasslands IBA at Nambale market in Nambale village market. The exercise was undertaken using drama and puppetry. Approximately 2,000 of the local market people and adjacent communities were sensitised during the conservation education outreach. The local Provincial Administration was represented by the area chief. Community members were encouraged to participate in local wet grasslands conservation and the local youth to engage in other sustainable alternative livelihoods including ecotourism activities such as bird watching for job creation and conservation of birds like blue swallows. During these activities we learnt many lessons including: many local people knew blue swallow in their local language and could easily identify it, however, most community members did not have knowledge about its migration, breeding and importance of birds' conservation.

Participative schools and local stakeholders meetings

School outreaches were conducted in the Busia grassland areas reaching out to about 3,000 students/pupils, local parents and teachers. Blue Swallow Working Group (BSWG) volunteers visited Nambale Boys High school (for a second time) and St James Primary school. The outreaches were participative in form of PowerPoint presentations, questions and answer sessions and skits, presentations topics covered included: introduction to blue swallows, characteristics, breeding, habitat, etc; importance of grasslands; threats to grasslands and birds (blue swallows); and how students can participate in the conservation of grasslands and birds. Lessons learnt during these exercises included the following: most students/pupils were curious to learn more about birds and need for their conservation; the schools were eager to include grassland conservation initiatives and bird watching in their club activities; and the students/pupils promised to act as 'Blue Swallow Ambassadors' by educating fellow young people and parents about the need for its conservation.