BIG BIRDING DAY

Connecting Birds to People and Nature

2014

Report

By

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OVERVIEW

The Uganda Big Birding Day (BBD) is a birding activity organized by NatureUganda in collaboration with other partners. The BBD 2014 was organized by Uganda Tourism Board with technical support from NatureUganda, Uganda Wildlife Authority and Uganda Bird Guides Club. This BBD was organized under the sub theme: "Bird and People, Friends for Life". It was launched on the 27th November at Kasenge Forest Resort where the birding was flagged off. Birders were then given the 28th November to travel to their birding destinations. The birding race took place on the 29th November with 38 teams birding across the whole country. These recorded a total of 731 bird species, the highest record for the BBD ever! The highest record for the day was 308 species and it came from Queen Elizabeth National Park, followed by 242 species from Budongo Central Forest Reserve and Murchison Falls National Park, Lake Mburo followed with 221 species and Fort Portal area with 209 species. The sites that participated included 21 sites in protected areas (National parks and forest reserves) and 16 non- protected areas. These results were announced during the birding Festival, which took place on 6th December at the Uganda Museum.

THE BIG BIRDING DAY 2014

Uganda Tourism Board organised a series of events for the Big Birding Day 2014 together with NatureUganda, Uganda Wildlife Authority, Uganda Birds Guides and other players in tourism and conservation. The activities for the BBD 2014 included the launch, birding race and the festival. These events linked all bird watchers, tourism promoters and conservationists with a common goal of appreciating and promoting bird tourism and conservation. BBD 2014 was organised under the theme; '***Birds and People, Friends for Life***'.

The BBD 2014 was launched on 27th November at Kasenge Forest Resort where a team of renowned international birders, Dominic Mitchell, the managing editor of Bird Watch – Europe's leading monthly birders magazine; Tim Appleton – co-founder and organiser of the British Birding Fair, and Bill Thompson – editor of the Bird Watcher's Digest and director of the Ohio Ornithologist Society were introduced and graced the birding exercise, which they were to participate in.

BBD 2014 Results

The birding race which was conducted on 29th November was coordinated by NatureUganda. The race attracted an incredible competition from 37 birding teams and over 375 participants across the country. This emanated from the eagerness and excitement, eventually producing an outstanding and unmatchable 731 bird species compared to previous BBDs (Table 1). This is due to the eminence this event has gained over the years among the dedicated souls of birders, tourism promoters and conservationists in Uganda. The highest record for the day was 308 species from Queen Elizabeth National Park, followed by 242 species from Budongo Central Forest Reserve and Murchison Falls National Park, and then Lake Mburo followed with 221 species and Fort Portal area with 209 species. The sites that participated included 21 sites inside protected areas (National parks and forest reserves) and 16 outside protected areas (Table 2).

Table 1: Summary BBD Results since 2009 to 2014

Year	Bird species	Highest species record	Participants	Teams
2009	386	156	317	21
2010	622	175	404	40
2011	569	207	366	36
2012	657	246	311	58
2013	708	275	489	73
2014	731	308	375	38

NatureUganda served as the tally centre for the birding activity, a job it has done for all the years BBD has been conducted, with a lot of dedication. This activity involved coordinating the birding teams in the field to carry out the birding and thereafter send their results/records in good time. Records that were received showed a rise in Uganda young birders participating in the race, which shows a bright

future for the birding tourism industry. Bird species recorded have been rising year by year. For instance, in 2009, 386 bird species were recorded from 17 sites; 622 species recorded in 2010, 569 species were recorded in 2011, 657 species in 2012, 708 species in 2013 and 731 species in 2014. The results of the Big Birding race 2014 were announced during the birding Festival, which took place on 6th December at the Uganda Museum.

During birding, the exercise was marred with rain across the whole country but this did not frustrate the birding spirits of participants from all age groups and this was a good indication from the dedicated teams all determined to win the race.



Birding Festival

The Birding festival was spear –headed by UTB and was held at the Uganda Museum. It is the occasion where results from the birding race were announced. It had speeches from distinguished guests including speakers from all the organising partners. In his remarks, at the BBD festival, ***Nature***Uganda's treasurer to the Executive Committee, Dr. Robert Nabayumya said that "***Nature***Uganda identified and mapped 34 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in Uganda with diverse bird species that is equivalent to 10% of species in the world and 47% of birds on the African continent". In this case, Uganda has more bird species per square kilometre compared to any other country in Africa. With this number of bird species both in and outside protected areas, a birding trip around Uganda is the most rewarding in east and central tropical birding destinations, he continued to emphasize.

NatureUganda would like to thank its members and partners for taking part in the birding exercise. Above all, the organisation remains committed to carrying out more bona fide research thereby contributing to biodiversity conservation and sustainable natural resource management by promoting the understanding, appreciation and conservation of nature.

Results for all BBD 2014 sites (PA=Protected Area, NON-PA=Un-Protected area)

Position	Site	Number Of Species	Site Type
1	Queen Elizabeth NP	308	PA
2	Budongo -Kaniyo Pabidi	242	PA
3	Murchison Falls NP	242	PA
4	Lake Mburo NP	221	PA
5	Fort Portal Area	219	NON-PA
6	Kidepo Valley NP	205	PA
7	Bwindi Impenetrable NP -Buhoma	197	PA
8	Entebbe Area	179	NON-PA
9	Semliki NP	128	PA
10	Budongo CFR-Royal Mile	124	PA
11	Tooro Semliki WR	120	PA
12	Mabira CFR	111	PA
13	Kibale NP	107	PA
14	Mabamba Bay	101	NON-PA
15	Kasohya Kitomi CFR	100	PA
16	Bulago Island	99	NON-PA
17	Bwindi Impenetrable NP-Ruhija	98	PA
18	Mpanga CFR	97	PA
19	Mgahinga Gorilla NP	92	PA
20	Maruzi Ranch -Apac	89	NON-PA
21	Echuya CFR	88	PA
22	Makanaga Bay	84	NON-PA
23	Namulonge-Kawanda Area	78	NON-PA
24	Bwindi Impenetrable NP-Rushaga	72	PA
25	Ssezibwa Falls Area	66	NON-PA
26	Ngamba Island	62	NON-PA
27	Bahai Temple	50	NON-PA
28	Masaka-Nabajuzi Area	47	NON-PA
29	Park Alexander	44	NON-PA
30	Islamic University in Uganda	38	NON-PA
31	Ruboni Community	34	PA
32	Makerere University Area	33	NON-PA
33	Budongo CFR-Busingiro	32	PA
34	Lutembe Bay	31	NON-PA
35	Rwenzori Mountains NP	28	PA
36	Busitema University	22	NON-PA
37	Kibale NP -Kakoge	22	PA
38	Gulu Area	20	NON-PA
	Total	**731**	