

The Namibia Birds and Power Lines Action Plan

(March 2011)



*The NamPower / Namibia Nature Foundation Strategic Partnership
(www.nnf.org.na/nampowerproject.htm)
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Background

The NamPower / Namibia Nature Foundation Strategic Partnership was launched in October 2008. A special workshop was organized in March 2011 in order to assess progress with the project over the past two years, especially in terms of training and awareness, gathering information on wildlife/power line interactions, and the development of the Environmental Information Service [EIS]); and to plan and prioritise activities for the next year.

A considerable amount of information has already be gathered on wildlife/power line interactions and there is a growing concern about the mortality of birds, and other wildlife, on our power lines. At the same time, outages caused by birds nesting on power line structures require unnecessary and costly intervention by power service providers. Special attention should therefore be given to planning and implementing mitigation at appropriate sites where there is sufficient information to indicate that there is a problem. Because much of the monitoring has taken place where there are interested and committed people, however, and in areas where visibility is relatively better due to open habitat, the sampling is biased in a geographic sense. It is not clear whether these problem areas are in fact the main problem areas, or represent a small part of the problem. Thus, more attention should be given to surveying and monitoring power lines across the country.

Some of the necessary mitigation may have to be applied on an experimental basis, in order to establish which methods work best under Namibian conditions. It is essential to have the inputs and support of the relevant NamPower and Regional Electricity Distribution staff who would be involved on a practical level, and who have the experience to contribute to the discussion.

An Assessment and Planning Workshop was therefore organized at Heja Game Lodge, near Windhoek, on 17 March 2011. This workshop builds upon a Bustard and Power Lines Workshop held at Keetmanshoop in November 2010, where an action plan was put together to address collisions by bustards and other birds on power lines in Namibia. Points from the latter plan have been merged with those discussed at the Windhoek meeting to form the present Birds and Power Lines Action Plan (March 2011).

The Namibia Bird and Power Lines Action Plan is being implemented by the NamPower/ NNF Strategic Partnership. We would like to thank all those who have contributed to the development of this action plan in one or another way: it stands as a milestone in the conservation history of Namibia.

Further details about the Partnership are available on www.nnf.org.na/nampowerproject.htm. The full reports on the Bustard and Power Lines Workshop (Keetmanshoop, November 2010) and the Planning and Assessment Workshop (Windhoek, 17 March 2011) may also be downloaded from this site.

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Actions	Priority*
1. MONITORING/SURVEYS	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set up and initiate a sampling methodology for transmission and distribution lines - Apply/adapt the methodology set up in RSA by Jessica Shaw - Assess geographic coverage and methods; frequency of monitoring; pilot areas - Monitor collision mortality: power line coverage – transmission and distribution (including RED and SWER lines); set up sample lines, taking access into account - Conduct comparative monitoring – lines with and without mitigation 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set up and implement bird population monitoring methodologies & practice - Monitor selected species: Kori Bustard and Ludwig's Bustard, Secretarybird, eagles and vultures; korhaans, storks, flamingos; other medium to large birds - Promote compatibility between methodology in RSA and Namibia regarding details of sampling protocol <ul style="list-style-type: none"> : mortality : relative abundance : real population estimate : distribution (bird atlas data) : information on breeding and young 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set up and coordinate monitoring teams - Outsource the coordination of administration: planning, permission of landowners, NamPower induction, data collection and feedback - Initiate monitoring in servitudes with bush growth in the north - Expand and build capacity of NamPower SHEW - Involve volunteers (e.g. Raleigh International; local communities) for foot surveys - Involve mountain bikers - Coordinate with Polytechnic practical work - Link to EIS for atlassing of ongoing key monitoring 	1
2. DEVELOPMENT & USE OF ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION SERVICE (EIS: PHASE III)	1-3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Website development to enhance the user experience ▪ Expanding the contact and user base of the EIS ▪ Journal articles, reports, books etc. ▪ Spatial data ▪ Dynamic data ▪ Sub sites ▪ Promote the EIS and build demand 	
3. INFORMATION, AWARENESS, EDUCATION & OUTREACH	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tools: newsletters; booklets*, posters, other visuals ▪ Medium: include Afrikaans & other languages ▪ Target groups: farmers/landowners/custodians, conservationists/NGOs, educational institutions, general public, EIA practitioners for best practice guides & mines/developments <p><i>*Review draft 'Birds and power lines' booklet in the light of this action plan</i></p>	
4. MITIGATION	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investigate all possible methods to make earth and conductor lines more visible e.g. flappers, illuminators, pigtailed, vibration dampers, reflective devices, sound (and ultrasonic) generators, colour/phosphorescent coating on lines and devices ▪ Compile guidelines for best practice mitigation for wildlife/power lines in Namibia ▪ Compile a plan of action for mitigation for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existing lines: refit where necessary (reactive) – dependent on results of monitoring - New lines - pre-emptive/proactive 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set minimum standards for lines – mines/farmers, lodges etc.: ECB & MME (& MET); implement EIA checklist ▪ Experiment with new/different mitigation options for existing (and new) lines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct testing on a scientific basis - Experiment/develop new mitigation methods (Polytechnic & Unam) ▪ Obtain commitment from power supply agencies to apply mitigation (for methods that are guaranteed effective) ▪ Investigate standard marking as part of line construction ▪ Roll-out good practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sociable Weaver dummy poles as mitigation method - highlight cost benefits - Economics study: costs of mitigation vs non-mitigation; proactive vs reactive mitigation 	
5. ENHANCEMENT OF COLLABORATION	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Obtain support of NamPower Exco for way forward ▪ Maintain more regular contact/communication with NamPower, REDs & private power ccs in all regions; rotate venues for working group meetings ▪ Further Involve partners in Namibia, including ECB, MME, MET ▪ Enhance regional collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Endangered Wildlife Trust-Wildlife & Energy Programme (WEP)</i> - <i>Flamingos (Botswana & RSA)</i> - <i>Bustards (RSA)</i> - <i>EIS (RSA)</i> - <i>Southern African Power Pool (feed in developments)</i> 	
6. RESEARCH	1-2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Initiate research on the following aspects (focus on development/testing of appropriate mitigation methods); obtain commitment from research institutions/supervisors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Sociable Weaver</i> - <i>Red-billed Buffalo-weaver</i> - <i>Bustards –tracking; map preferred areas and overlay flyways with power lines; correlate with rainfall</i> - <i>Flamingos – tracking to determine flight paths</i> ▪ Students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Recruit Namibian and other MSc student(s)</i> - <i>Link to NamPower bursary scheme</i> 	
7. PREPARATION FOR WIND ENERGY	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct a desk-top review to determine best practice mitigation (5 years or sooner) ▪ Determine possible impacts (collisions) ▪ Collaborate with existing initiatives ▪ Start preparing: set up mitigation & good practice guides 	
8. FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain present project managers/coordinators ▪ Expand working group; encourage establishment of regional working groups ▪ Use a more contractual approach – appoint drivers for sub-projects; determine outputs & outcomes; cost & commission activities ▪ Investigate appointment of field workers for the Partnership 	
9. FUNDING	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Forward a new funding proposal to EIB at an appropriate stage (once target product/booklet has been produced) 	

*Priority: 1 –2011; 2 – 2012; 3 - 2013