

the following objectives:

1. At each site, map the distribution of endemic, rare, and endangered bird species as given in the list provided by NBCWG, and birds of common interest to be given by the Kavango Bird Club tour guides.
2. Map the distribution of reeds at selected sites, and choose one reedbed at each site for further study.
3. Investigate which species of the wetland birds use the reeds or reedbeds for breeding, perching, hunting, sheltering, and feeding, at regular intervals over the period of three months.
4. Investigate impact of reed harvesting on those birds.

The following outcomes are expected:

1. An annotated list of birds that depend on reeds for breeding, perching, hunting, sheltering and feeding.
2. A distribution map for a list of birds given under the categories in Appendix 1 and for the selected sites.
3. Information on where, when and how reeds are harvested, by whom and their impact on birds.
4. More reed harvesting is expected to be found in the villages than in protected or semi-protected areas.
5. Recommendations on how best to reduce habitat destruction and hopefully possible solutions will be provided.

News from Bushmanland

Dries Alberts, MET Tsumkwe

17/4/09: The water in Nyae Nyae Pans has finally gone and the cranes have left. We had a lot of Wattled Cranes – mostly 60-70, one group of 42; but no Blue Cranes.

White Stork sightings

Marion Klingelhoefter, email namtours@iafrica.com.na

On 1/1/09 we counted 14 White Storks 15 km inside Botswana, after the Ngoma border post, in the area bordering on Chobe. They were right next to the road.

New ICF/EWT Partnership for African Cranes

Debbie Thiart, Grus Grapevine March 2009

Website: www.ewt.org.za email: crane@ewt.org.za,
blog : <http://cranemania.wildlifedirect.org>

From 1 March 2009, the Endangered Wildlife Trust's (EWT) South African Crane Working Group (SACWG) and the International Crane Foundation (ICF) / EWT Partnership's African Cranes, Wetlands and Communities (ACWAC) amalgamated under the "ICF/EWT Partnership for African Cranes". The new structure offers increased opportunities for networking, shared learning and, in general, greater efficiency and involvement in all projects that we support across Africa.

The group will be managed by Kerryn Morrison, assisted by Debbie Thiart and Cynthia Chigangaidze. Osiman Mabhachi will coordinate and support the community based projects that are assisted in Africa. A full-time GIS and Database coordinator position is planned, to assist with projects across Africa. The SA projects based locally in key crane regions will continue in a similar way to now, except with an exciting new strategy in place for each. These projects will operate under the EWT banner in South Africa.

For further details please contact Kerryn on Kerrynm@ewt.org.za or 082 877 5126.

WHITE PELICAN BREEDING AT HARDAP DAM, FEBRUARY 2009

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Pelican breeding at Hardap Dam, February 2009
(photo Holger Kolberg)

Early in February 2009 I had the opportunity to check up on pelican breeding activity at Hardap. There are three islands now because the dam is currently quite low (50%) – the "regular" bird island, then a smaller, rocky one to the dam wall side of that and then a sandbank on the other side of bird island. On the small rocky island about 20 pairs were breeding (we didn't go onto this island). On the main island I guesstimated about 200 nests. There were a few (± 15) small black chicks, the rest all eggs that were just busy hatching so we left the island very quickly but managed to find five colour rings and three metal ones. On the sandbank there are probably another 150 nests, all with eggs still. The problem with this island is that if the water level rises about 50cm then the nests will be flooded, if the water drops much further there will be a shallow connection to the mainland and jackals will have access. So this colony is basically doomed one way or the other. My total pelican count for the dam was 736 plus 9 Pink-backed Pelicans although I'm sure some of the pelicans that I counted as immature White Pelicans may in fact have been Pink-backed ones.

PELICAN AIRLIFT

Dr Hu Berry, email ecoguide@iway.na

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It was 1971 and the Great White Pelican was determined to breed. Propitious rains fell across many parts of the country, changing the face of Etosha Pan from a desiccated, saline desert into a vast, ephemeral but shallow lagoon. To its north, deluges on the Angolan highlands brought to torrents of water, reverently referred to by the Owambos as *efundja* (meaning flood), coursing through the maze of *oshanas*. These transient water courses converge on Lake Oponono, overflowing into the Ekuma River, which in turn drains into the great Pan. Initially targeting Oponono, about 3 000 pelicans began nesting on islands in June, and before long their eggs dotted the sandbanks. The local fisher folk soon discovered and harvested this rich source of protein, causing the pelicans to abandon their nests. The urge to reproduce remained unsatisfied, sending the pelicans