

African Waterfowl Census

Report for Uganda

July 2013



***Nature*Uganda**

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1.1 Introduction

Uganda as a country is strategically located to cover a high diversity of habitats suitable for all kinds of birds. This includes among others the forests, woodlands, grasslands, wetlands and open waters. The diversity of habitats makes Uganda one of the richest countries in terms of bird species compared to its size in Africa. The wetlands and open waters are good places for feeding, breeding and roosting of the water birds. It is estimated that over 200 species of birds in the country are migrants. Currently, *Nature*Uganda has established 28 sites where regular monitoring of water birds is done every January and July.

1.2 Objectives of the surveys

The survey is designed to strengthen the water bird monitoring program and produce a detailed analysis of habitats, trends and migratory bird patterns in Uganda during January and July of every year.

Specifically the surveys are aimed at accomplishing the following;

- Providing a clear description of migratory bird patterns, including resting and breeding sites, within Uganda.
- Conducting bird surveys every year in January and July, in all sites monitored within Uganda. These surveys estimate bird numbers using total counts and provide opportunities for trend analyses.
- Providing a platform for training to young enthusiastic individuals in water bird monitoring and improving the skills of the experienced participants.

1.3 Survey procedures

Attempts are always made to follow the same routes as the previous counts. Therefore the methods and modes of counts are often maintained. The counts on relatively open water are carried out on boats moving close to the shores at a relatively slow speed. Counts on wetlands and smaller crater lakes are done on foot moving round the site. Motorable and open areas are sometimes done in slow moving vehicles with several stopovers. Difficult areas to move through are done by standing at a single strategic point and then telescopes are used to scan the area. Efforts are made to ensure that total counts of all the water birds in the target sites are made. Data recording sheets are provided to all the teams.

1.4 Participants for July 2013 African waterfowl censuses

Participants for these counts are volunteers mainly interested in birding. They include NU staff and membership plus the Uganda Wildlife Authority rangers/guides. Counts in the Western region were led by Dianah Nalwanga, as the team leader, assisted by Michael Opige, Achilles Byaruhanga, Kenzarwa Allen, Moses Matsiko, Robert Adaruku and Fred

Alaru. Counts in the sites in the central region were led by Dianah Nalwanga assisted by Michael Opige, Geoffrey Akule, Phionah Mwesige and Immaculate Odd. The Eastern counts were led by Dianah Nalwanga, assisted by Lydia Tushabe and Imran Ejotre. In MFNP, the team comprised of Michael Opige, Dianah Nalwanga, Phionah Mwesige, Taban Bruhan and Geoge Khaphu.

1.5 Results from the survey

1.5.1 Site accounts

In the July 2013 waterfowl census, 32,501 individuals belonging to 76 species were recorded in the 17 sites surveyed. The site that recorded the highest number of birds was Lutembe bay with 12,025 individuals followed by Nakiwogo bay with 7,048 individuals and then Kazinga Channel with 5,026 individuals. The highest number of species was recorded on Murchison Falls- Albert Nile (39). This was followed by 34 species on Kazinga Channel and then 30 species on Lutembe Bay (Table 1).

1.5.2 Species accounts

Among the 76 species recorded from the 17 sites surveyed during the July counts, the White-winged Tern had the highest number of individuals (10,459), with Lutembe bay accounting for 99.9% of these individuals. This was followed by the Grey-headed Gull (3,873) with Nakiwogo bay accounting for 78% of these individuals. The Pied Kingfisher (3,154) followed with 82% of these being recorded along Kazinga Channel in Queen Elizabeth National Park (Table 2).

The most common species was the Spur-winged Plover recorded in 76.4% of the sites, followed by the Pied Kingfisher recorded in 64.7% and then the Cattle Egret, Egyptian Goose, African Jacana and Black Crake all recorded in 59% of the sites (Table 2).

Notable sightings for this count include the White-backed Duck recorded on Lake Opeta (2). This is a rarely recorded species in this site. The greater Flamingo (2) recorded on Bagusa Crater in Queen Elizabeth National Park is an interesting rare record for the site. The other species that were recorded and their respective numbers in the sites surveyed are shown in the Table 2 below.

Table 1: Number of bird species and individuals recorded for sites surveyed in July 2013 waterfowl counts

Sites	Individuals	Species
Western Region		
Bagusa Crater	2,941	11
Lake Mbuoro	382	15
Kasenya Crater	37	6
Kashaka Landing Site	163	11
Kazinga Channel	5,026	34
Kikorongo Crater	246	26
Maseche Crater	515	7
Munyanyange Crater	57	7
Nshenyi Crater	106	8
Sheobill Swamp	41	7
Eastern Region		
Doho Rice Scheme	1,592	15
Lake Bisina	252	18
Lake Opeta	933	23
Northern Region		
Murchison Falls A. Nile	908	39
Central Region		
Lutembe Bay	12,025	30
Mabamba Bay	229	24
Nakiwogo Bay	7,048	18
Total	32,501	76

Table 2: Results from the Waterfowl census showing sites and species recorded in July 2013

Br. No.	Species Name	Bagusa Crater	Doho Rice Scheme	Kasenyi Crater	Kashaka Landing Site	Kazinga Channel	Kikorongo Crater	Lake Bisina	Lake Mbuuro	Lake Opeta	Lutembe Bay	Mabamba Bay	Maseche Crater	Munyanyange Crater	Murchison Falls A. Nile	Nakiwogo Bay	Nshenyi Crater	Sheobill Swamp	Individuals	Sites
4	Little Grebe	24											62				69		155	3
12	Pink-backed Pelican				111	10	16							13		33			183	5
17	Long-tailed Cormorant		7			144		127		402	59	26			3	572			1,340	8
18	Greater Cormorant					877					2				1	1443			2,323	4
19	African Darter														59	1			60	2
23	Little Bittern							14		14					1				29	3
24	Dwarf Bittern		17																17	1
25	Grey Heron				1	18	1				1				3	8			32	6
26	Goliath Heron					11	3								16				30	3
27	Black-headed Heron		23				2	4							15				44	4
28	Purple Heron					1	4	2		42	1	10			19				79	7
30	Common Squacco Heron					25	1	5		44	3	7							85	6
31	Rufous-bellied Heron									1									1	1
32	Cattle Egret	42	405			73		1	1	57		13	211		23		4		830	10
33	Green-backed Heron					31	6	4	28	15					5				89	6
34	Great Egret		8			24	5				1	2			13	1			54	7
36	Little Egret					47	1				25				2	199			274	5
38	Yellow-billed Egret		39				4					1			3				47	4
39	White-backed Night Heron								2										2	1
40	Black-crowned Night Heron								3										3	1
41	Shoebill											1							1	1
42	Hamerkop		1		8	104			29		6	3				1			152	7

43	African Open-billed Stork		1062					10		20	38			1	10			1,141	6
48	Saddle-billed Stork				1								1	4				6	3
49	Marabou Stork			11	19								8	15				53	4
50	Yellow-billed Stork			4	28	5								4				41	4
51	Hadada Ibis	2	2		74			4						37	3	1		123	7
53	Glossy Ibis									17								17	1
54	Sacred Ibis	2		1	47										9			59	4
55	African Spoonbill						13											13	1
57	Lesser Flamingo	2725											1					2,726	2
58	Greater Flamingo	2																2	1
59	Fulvous Whistling Duck								1					7				8	2
60	White-faced Whistling Duck		17				14		6		11			13				61	5
61	Egyptian Goose	6		9	92	131					38		2	65	39	1	31	414	10
72	Yellow-billed Duck										43	32			32			107	3
77	African Pygmy Goose								22									22	1
79	Spur-winged Goose										4			11				15	2
80	Knob-billed Duck										7			12				19	2
82	White-backed Duck							9										9	1
95	African Marsh Harrier						1				1							2	2
137	African Fish Eagle			2	31			58	1	11	1			26	3			133	8
144	Osprey													1		1		2	2
194	Grey Crowned Crane													43				43	1
198	Lesser Moorhen								11									11	1
199	Common Moorhen						2				1							3	2
201	Black Crake		1	2	102	1	13	20	38	1	4			25				207	10
202	Allen's Gallinule								34									34	1
216	African Finfoot							17										17	1
225	African Jacana		2	9	46	6	17	6	69	16	61					1		233	10
226	Lesser Jacana						11		38		6			69				124	4
233	Ringed Plover			4														4	1

238	Kittlitz's Plover			1	1		15				2			23			1	1	44	7
239	Three-banded Plover					2	1											1	4	3
245	Long-toed Plover	1					3	4		14	88	6			35			3	154	8
248	Wattled Plover		2			5	1		4						2			1	15	6
249	Spur-winged Plover	10	1	21	5	128	14				7		11	4	30	47	4	3	285	13
252	Common Sandpiper					8	1				33	1			6				49	5
256	Slender-billed Gull										160								160	1
256	Wood Sandpiper	2							1			5							8	3
257	Common Greenshank					1	4				8	5			1				19	5
259	Marsh Sandpiper										30								30	1
279	Ruff										36								36	1
282	Black-winged Stilt	125		9		11	3				6		225				25		404	7
289	Senegal Thick-knee														14				14	1
290	Water Thick-knee					30	3		3										36	3
306	Grey-headed Gull					15					840					3018			3,873	3
307	Lesser Black-backed Gull					2								6					8	2
314	Black-headed Gull															1596			1,596	1
318	White-winged Tern									9	10450								10,459	2
320	Gull-billed Tern					4					70			2					76	3
331	African skimmer					380									39				419	2
464	Giant Kingfisher														4				4	1
465	Pied Kingfisher			1		2590	1	11	169	68	22	18	3		238	33			3,154	11
466	Malachite Kingfisher		5			45	1	11	37	7	4	8			39				157	9
	Purple Swamphen							1		11		2			4				18	4
	Individuals	2,941	1,592	37	163	5,026	246	252	382	933	12,025	229	515	57	908	7,048	106	41	32,501	17
	Species	11	15	6	11	34	26	18	15	23	30	24	7	7	39	18	8	7	76	76