

Project Update: December 2012

We were recently invited to present preliminary results from our project at the Third Annual Diamond Route Research Conference, which was held at the De Beers offices in Johannesburg, South Africa. The conference was a multi disciplinary event with its main objective being to provide a platform for researchers to share the outcomes of the range of research projects that have taken place across the “Diamond Route” properties within the DeBeers family of companies and provide guidance on future research and management priorities for the properties.

The conference was attended by over 400 delegates from 79 Institutions. The keynote address was by Bob Scholes of The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in South Africa, who gave an invaluable overview on the importance of biodiversity conservation in southern Africa. In total, 34 scientific papers and 24 posters were presented across seven different subject areas. Sessions included topics as diverse as heritage and archaeology and mammalian reproductive ecology, as well as a session devoted to avian conservation (all the conference PowerPoint presentations and abstracts can be accessed through the Diamond Route Website: www.diamondroute.com). The title of our presentation was “The impact of rapid land redistribution on avian diversity and abundance in Zimbabwe.” The multi-disciplinary nature of the conference made for an excellent platform for knowledge exchange and information dissemination. There was considerable interest from many delegates, and we were encouraged to expand the project to multiple provinces in Zimbabwe so that a clearer picture of the effects of the land reform programme to biodiversity could be obtained, for the benefit both of biodiversity and decision makers."

