

**Using low key monitoring to promote community conservation of the Blue Swallow,
Hirundo atrocaerulea in Mabamba Bay, a Key Biodiversity Area, North of Lake
Victoria, in Uganda.**



Progress Report I

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Introduction

This project targets the conservation of the Blue Swallow *Hirundo atrocaerulea* at Mabamba bay, an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area in Uganda. NatureUganda, in collaboration with the community at Mabamba Bay through this Rufford funded project is dedicated to continue monitoring the Blue Swallow population so as to promote its conservation. This project is aimed at promoting community conservation of the Blue Swallow, by obtaining reliable information and monitoring the state of its population and threats to its habitat. This is a one year period ending in May 2017

This report gives a summary of the activities that have happened in the project preparation period.

A: World Migratory Birds Day Celebrations at Mabamba Bay, 14th May 2016

NatureUganda (NU) staff and members as well as the community at Mabamba Bay set out to commemorate the World Migratory Birds Day that was celebrated around the world on 10th May under the slogan “...**and when the skies fall silent? Stop illegal killing, taking and trade!**” These celebrations took place at the Mabamba Bay on 14th May, 2016. Mabamba Bay is an important Bird and Biodiversity Area as well as one of the important stopovers for Migratory birds in Uganda. The function was organized by the community at the site and Funded by NatureUganda.

For a start, we had an introduction from Irene Namubiru, the chairperson of the Mabamba Wetland Eco-tourism Association (MWETA), a Site Support Group spearheading the conservation of the site, who introduced the MWETA committee and other MWETA members that had attended the event at Mabamba bay. She further briefed the members on the projects being undertaken by the association and the progress they have made, which was encouraging.

During the function, NatureUganda gave remarks on the Migratory Birds and the threats they are faced with along their migratory flyways, among which was mentioned; illegal killing and trade as the major upcoming threats as well as Climate Change and Habitat destruction, which is the main threat for Uganda. Among the Migratory birds in Uganda is the Blue Swallow, which inhabits three main sites in Uganda, Mabamba being its second most important site after Sangobay. This is where the Rufford funded project on the Blue Swallow is being conducted by NatureUganda together with the community at the site. The project was introduced to the community members at this function and they welcomed it greatly.

Thereafter, we were treated to boat rides on the Mabamba Swamp to look for the water birds especially the migrants as we celebrated the day. The boats/canoes used act as a source of livelihoods for the community. Unfortunately, we did not spot any Blue Swallow as it was a little early in their migration time into Uganda.

NatureUganda continues to empower communities living in and around Important Bird and Biodiversity areas for better livelihoods, for example the guides on all the five boats used on this day were members of MWETA. The Chairperson Irene thanked NatureUganda for their continued support to the association and further expressed their anticipation and promised their full support in implementing the Blue Swallow Project and in any future collaboration.

Lillian representing the team from NatureUganda, giving her remarks.



Irene, the Chairperson of the community group giving her remarks



Part of the team during the bird watching boat ride

B: The First Blue Swallow Planning Meeting, 9th June 2016

Team Members present

1. Dianah Nalwanga
2. Achilles Byaruhanga
3. Judith Mirembe
4. Lillian Twanza

On the 9th June, 2016, the team handling the Blue Swallow project from NatureUganda (NU) had the first planning meeting at the Secretariat Boardroom. The meeting was aimed at debriefing the members on their roles as members of this team as well as giving a recap on the expectations for this project. We had a discussion on how we would run the project and the different actions that were to be done within the given project period. Within the meeting, a stakeholder analysis was done and different stakeholders selected with their different roles defined as would be played in the project.

Action Points

- Produce a poster to publicise the threats to the Blue Swallow and what this project is doing to support its conservation. This will be one of the materials used in the stake holders meeting planned for early July.
- Set a date for the stakeholders' meeting and contact them to invite them for this meeting.

- The team should come up with a schedule for the activities within the project.
- We should also schedule a site visit to the site to confirm the arrival of the Blue Swallow in its wintering grounds in Mabamba. A report from a member of Mabamba Wetland Eco-tourism Association, the community at the site has given an update about the sighting of the Blue Swallow in Mabamba. This shows that the community is more than willing to work with us on this project.

Judith Mirembe, was tasked to follow this up and ensure that all the actions are done.

The Blue Swallow Lead team during the meeting (L-R: Lillian Twanza, Dianah Nalwanga, and Achilles Byaruhanga)



The Blue Swallow Lead team after the meeting (L-R: Dianah, Judith Mirembe, Lillian, Achilles)

