Nigeria:

2013 World Migratory Birds Day Celebration by the Nigerian Conservation Foundation

Solomon Adefolu solomon.adefolu@ncfnigeria.org and 'Bunmi Jegede oluwabunmi.jegede@ncfnigeria.org

On the 11th and 12th May, 2013, Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF) joined the rest of the world to commemorate this year’s World Migratory Birds Day (WMBD) with the Creative Bird Exercise and Bird Expeditions to the Nature Reserve of the Lekki Conservation Centre, a 78 hectares of protected forest within the fast developing area of the Lekki Peninsula, Lagos State.

Participants

The celebration had about 100 participants in total, consisting of representatives of School Conservation Club Members, Lekki Bird Club (LBC) members, Volunteers, Club Coordinators, School head, Wildlife Officers, Bird Researchers and local Media Men.

Highlight of Activity:

In Nigeria, the WMBD celebration which was organized by the Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF) in collaboration with a volunteer bird-based conservation group, Lekki Bird Club (LBC) which is known to have conducted bird expedition to key migratory bird hotspots in Lagos, Nigeria. The following were the highlights of the event:
1. Awareness Session of World Migratory Bird Days

The objective of this activity was to welcome the participants and also introduce them to the World Migratory Bird Day; its origin and significance; the theme: networking for migratory birds; and brief description (including range, migratory pattern, conservation status) of five focal migratory birds species of the day:-

White Stock (Ciconia ciconia), European Roller (Coracias garrulus), Egyptian Vulture (Neophron percnopterus), Pied Flycatcher (Ficedula hypoleuca) and Collared Pratincole (Glareola pratincola). Participants were also able to generate discussions on these migratory species, and their importance in ensuring environmental sustainability and our roles as custodians of the habitats of these species without boundary.

2. Bird Watching and Mentoring

The bird watching exercise was conducted in the Lekki Nature Reserve which is known to have recorded about six migratory bird species. The reserve consists of mangrove swamp forest and savannah grassland vegetation. The exercise was aimed at the wildlife club member to develop their ability to observe and identify various bird species with their environment using the savannah grassland area of the reserve as a field laboratory. Some of the species identified within the savannah include the White-throated Bee-eater, Senegal thickness, Flappet Lark and the Red-eyed Dove. This exercise also exposed them to binoculars use and some few birding tips from the LBC coordinator.

Not surprisingly, the participants, especially the children, were so fascinated with the experience and looked forward to such exposure in the future. Participants also had the opportunity to represent their experience in an artistic creative bird exercise. This exercise was facilitated by the LBC Coordinator, Volunteers from AP Leventis Ornithological Institute (APLORI) and the University of Lagos who provided assistance to coordinate this great exercise.

3. Creative Bird Exercise

The Creative Bird Exercise was the most memorable part of the whole event as the students were opportune to color bird pictures and also take ownership of their artwork. This activity exposed the children’s artistic and creativity ability and at the end of the creative bird exercise, they all produced beautiful
artwork of these birds and were excited to take snapshot with their paintings.

This has help promote bird education among this young chaps and also making them nurture their innate creative qualities. The Club Coordinators who were also involved showed so much enthusiasm and promised to further engage the club members in this type of exercise in their school on a regular basis.

Conclusion

The WMBD celebration was successful and fulfilling for both NCF and the participants. At the end of the event, we had successfully created awareness on migratory birds and the need to protect bird habitat for their survival vis-à-vis the role they play in the provision of ecosystem service. Through the bird watching and mentoring with the LBC, a new generation of bird enthusiasts has been born and this will help nurture the stake of bird conservation in their respective homes and schools. We patiently look forward to 2014 when we will happy to organize another WMBD celebration!

Media Output:

The story has been leverage on NCF Website and the National News paper, NCF Social Media channels.

This has also been leverage on the Facebook Group Page of WCA Project-Phase II
http://www.facebook.com/groups/376838849073376/
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For further information:
Nigerian Conservation Foundation
Lekki Conservation Centre
Km 19 Lagos-Epe Expressway Lagos
P.O.Box 74638,
Victoria Island, Lagos Nigeria.
www.ncfnigeria.org | info@ncfnigeria.org