

# The Fish Eagle

Newsletter



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## Hello environmental ambassadors!!

It's term II already! Term I was quite eventful and full of interesting activities. We did some tree planting and interesting educational talks with schools in Lusaka.

This issue highlights major activities from term 1, tips for bird identification, highlights from the Global Big Day, introduction to Spring Alive campaign 2022, some interesting articles and artworks from pupils, and the activity for term 2. Enjoy!!





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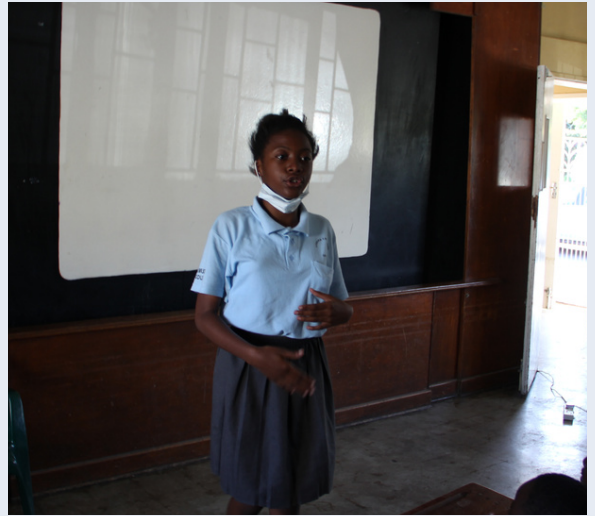


Partnership for  
nature and people

# Highlights of term one



Tree planting activity at Chartonel School



Educational talk at Lumuno School



Tree planting activity at Chartonel School



Tree planting activity at Chartonel School



Educational talk at Rhodes Park School



Bird walk at Lazy J ranch with learners from Woodford School

# The Spring Alive-2022

Dear learners

We are happy to inform you that we will be participating in this year's Spring Alive (SA), under the theme; "Citizen Science for Birds." We look forward to having you participate in this year's SA activities!!

## What is citizen science?

Citizen science is scientific research conducted by people who are not professional scientists.



### Did you Know?

Some of the biggest discoveries in the world have been made by people without official scientific qualifications or funding?

## How does citizen science help birds?

Birds can be found in almost every part of the world and often migrate vast distances. Citizen science can help us keep track of bird numbers and how they are changing around the globe. With this information, we can identify birds and habitats that are under threat, and act to help them.

## HAVE YOU SEEN THESE BIRDS?



WHITE STORK



COLLARED SAND MARTIN



COMMON RINGED PLOVER



BARN SWALLOW



COMMON CUCKOO



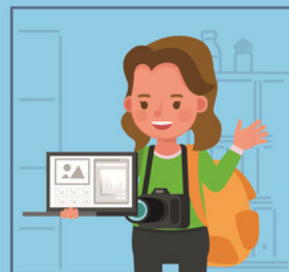
EUROPEAN BEE-EATER



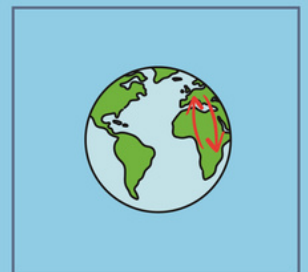
COMMON SWIFT



1. RECORD YOUR SIGHTINGS



2. LOG THEM ON THE SPRING ALIVE WEBSITE



3. TRACK THEIR MIGRATION!

LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE TO CITIZEN SCIENCE AT [SPRINGALIVE.NET](https://springalive.net)



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# THE GLOBAL BIG DAY

13th–14th May 2022

**By Akeelah Mwale & Alison Simpanzye**

Global Big Day is an annual celebration of birds around you. It is celebrated every second Saturday of May and October every year. This year's May event was commemorated on the 14th of May under the theme; **"Dim the Lights for Birds at Night!"** which highlights the impacts of light pollution on migratory birds as the world is undergoing a huge transformation in terms of technological advancement and construction and the need to raise awareness about it. Participating in GBD is easy, you can even be part of Global Big Day from home. If you can spare 5 or 10 minutes, report your bird observations. If you have more time, submit several checklists of birds throughout the day. You never know what you might spot. Your observations help us better understand global bird populations.

Studies have shown that artificial light alters natural patterns of light and dark within ecosystems, and contributes to the deaths of millions of birds each year. Light pollution can cause birds to change their migration patterns, foraging behaviours, etc. A key goal for this year's World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD)/Global Birding Day (GBD) was to raise awareness of the issue of light pollution and its negative impacts on migratory birds. People around the world participated in this exciting event, and like any other year, the BWZ team did it in style.



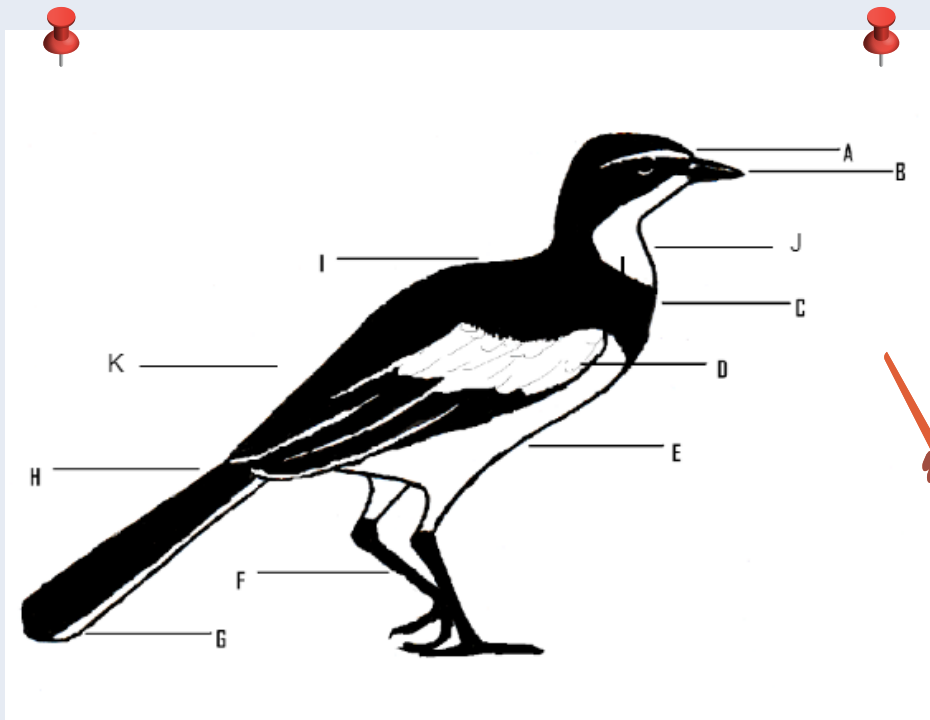
The BirdWatch Zambia team celebrated this popular day at Amadeus farms, a large privately owned land near the Mulungushi river. The farms have agricultural activities, such as irrigation of crops, rain-fed crops, livestock, etc. The farm harbors different habitat types (woodlands, wetlands, croplands) that support a diversity of birds and other wildlife species.



BWZ team during the May Global Big Day

# Identifying a bird

By Leslie Reynolds



## A - Supercilium / eyebrow stripe

The supercilium is a common feature in birds and is probably a form of camouflage to deceive predators by breaking up the profile of the head and disguising the eye. The White-browed Robin-Chat has a very distinctive white supercilium.

## B - Bill / Beak

The bill is an immediate indicator of a bird's diet. There are several different groupings based on bill shape and diet:

the nectar-feeders with a long, curved, and slender bill (eg. Sunbirds); ground-probers with a long, slender, straight, or slightly curved bill (eg. Ibises); fish-eaters with a long, sharp stabbing bill (eg. Darter); insect-eaters with a short, slender bill (eg. Flycatchers); parrots with a stout, hooked, nut-cracking bill; and raptors and owls with sharp, hooked bills. The colour of the bill can also be an important identifying tool, for example, the two different species of Oxpecker are told apart by the colour of their bill, one is all red (the Red-billed Oxpecker) one is yellow with a red tip (the Yellow-billed Oxpecker).

### C - Breast

Often diagnostic in colour, for example in distinguishing between different species of bee-eater.

### D - Shoulders

A number of birds have shoulder patches such as certain widowbirds and chats.

### E - Belly

Also diagnostic in colour for example in separating different species of sunbird.

### F - Leg

The characteristics of the leg can also tell us about the nature of some birds. For example, swallows and swifts have very short legs as they spend most of their time on the wing, wading birds such as sandpipers and stilts have long legs to keep their bodies out of the water while they feed, and birds of prey such as owls have very strong legs and feet for catching their prey with. Again the colour of the leg can also be diagnostic.

### G - Outer tail retrices

Many birds have white or light-coloured outer-tail feathers. It is an important feature to look for when identifying groups such as the pipits, wagtails, nightjars, honeyguides..

### H - Tail

Look for the length and shape of the tail. Some birds have very short tails such as crombecs and some eremomelas. Others have notably long tails such as wagtails and mousebirds. Many male birds use long tails as part of their breeding plumage to attract females, for example widowbirds and whydahs. Martins have forked tails and other birds have tail streamers such as the barn swallow and certain types of roller.

### I - Back

It is possible to separate out groups of cisticolas and pipits on the basis of whether or not they have streaking on the back.

### J - Throat

The throat is an important feature that helps to distinguish between similar species such as the White-throated Swallow and Barn Swallow. Unique markings on the throat in some species like the Lizard Buzzard, Palm Trushes, Collared Pratincole and Longclaws are conspicuous.

### K - Wing

Unigue features on or under the wing also helps to identify or distinguish some birds from similar species.

# PUPILS' CORNER

## Importance of protecting birds

Chisomo Njoka | Grade 11 | Kasisi School

According to this year's theme, **"Action for Bird and Environmental Conservation,"** the aim is to get more people to participate in the conservation of birds and the environment. This can only be made possible if people are sensitized on the importance of birds.

To begin with, birds are pollinators and seed dispersers. This happens as they carry pollen grains from the plant they have been feeding on to another and seeds from one place to another. This helps to maintain the existence of trees in the ecosystem.

Birds also feed on a variety of insects, rodents, and other small mammals. This helps farmers to make more money as the money to be used for insecticides is saved. This also helps prevent the use of pest control measures that are not environmentally friendly.



**Brown-necked Parrot feeding on wild fruits: Photo by Kelvin Mkandawire**



**Böhm's Bee-eater: Photo by Chinga Lufwino**

Apart from that, birds are natural indicators of weather conditions and natural disasters. For example, birds can feel waves of earthquakes that are miles away, hence, fly to safer places. This allows people to know what to expect of nature and prepare adequately and in time.

Birds are also a source of revenue. Many tourists may travel from far to come to watch birds. In the process, money is paid for hospitality services, transport, and entry into the national parks or other bird watching areas. This money is then used for the betterment of the citizens of Zambia.



# Is luxury really worth losing our earth for?

Ireen Chifumbano | Grade 7A | Pinewood Preparatory school

Many people look at it as the cutting down of a few trees and that's it. But what really is deforestation? Deforestation is when people cut down trees to use for human purposes. But little do people know that it leads to many effects such as droughts, habitat loss, and desertification. Deforestation also leads to habitat loss, which is the process by which a natural habitat becomes incapable of supporting its natural species.

Deforestation has led to the direct loss and degradation of wildlife habitats. The removal of trees and other types of vegetation reduces shelter and breeding habitats. This affects us in so many ways, for example, farmers now have to look for fertile land in places not affected by droughts. Water becomes a challenge to reach in certain undeveloped areas of the world.

Healthy ecosystem= Happy birds



Unhealthy ecosystem= Sad birds



Not only forests and mammals are affected, but birds are also affected. Let me give you an example of the Black-cheeked Lovebird. The Black-cheeked Lovebird is a small, rare, and beautiful parrot bird. It is mainly green and has a brown head, red beak, and white earrings. It is found in southwest Zambia. It lives in forest areas with access to open water but is very vulnerable due to habitat loss.

There are still many causes of habitat loss, these include, Industrial production, Urbanization, etc. People have to learn to let go of certain activities for wealth and learn to protect their environment and surroundings.

But the question really is how can we preserve our natural surroundings? We can ;

- ✓ **Plant trees**
- ✓ **Stop cutting down trees**

# Plastic pollution

CLEOPATRA INAMBAO | Grade 8 | Chartnel Community School

Plastic pollution is the littering of paper in the environment. A good example of land pollution is the following;

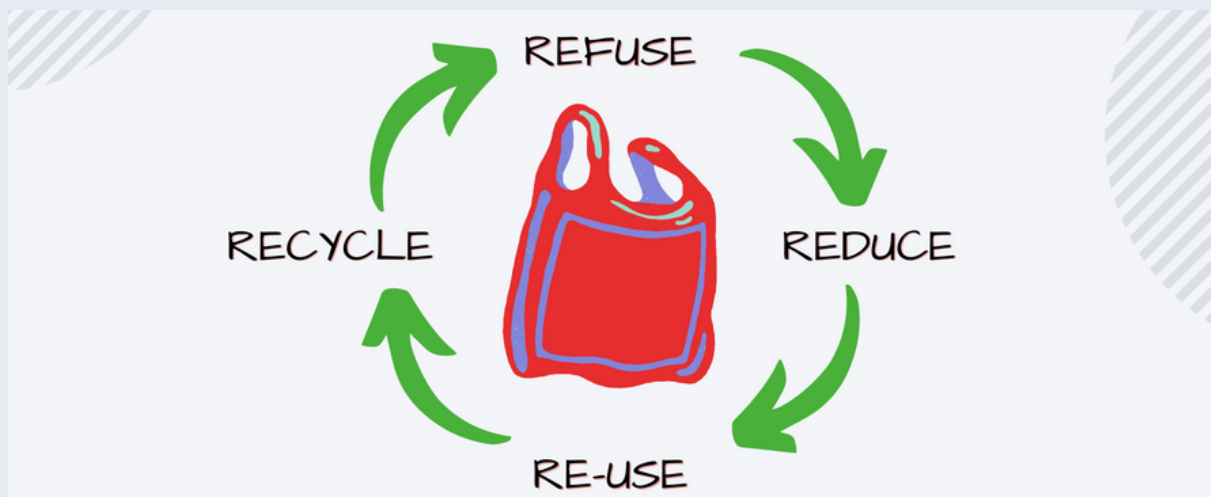
Solid waste - this includes all types of rubbish we make all at home, schools, hospitals, workplace and so on. Things like paper, plastic, containers, bottles, cans, and even used cars, broken electronic goods, broken furniture, and hospital waste are all examples of solid waste.

Plastic pollution is caused by common land pollutants. Plastic pollution can result in many effects here are some examples.

- Unpleasant smell
- It kills the birds and aquatic life
- It pollutes the water
- It makes an area less reproductive which means it cannot support the growth of the crops you plant.

To protect birds and our surroundings, we need to stop plastic pollution by doing the following:

- Make people aware of the harmful effects of littering.
- Buying biodegradable products.
- The best way of preventing land pollution is to use the four Rs:



# Art-based Environmental Education

Dear learners,

In term 1, young learners from different schools told beautiful stories about their favourite birds through art/paintings. You can do something like this too and send your drawings to: [andrewmbenjile.bwz@gmail.com](mailto:andrewmbenjile.bwz@gmail.com) so that they can feature in the next newsletter editions.

## The African Skimmer

A widely known threatened bird in Zambia. The African skimmer is a beautiful bird that is commonly found in protected national parks. It has a beautiful orange beak and is usually found along rivers and lakes.



Art-work by Aehali Tonga from Pinewood Preparatory School in Lusaka



Art-works by learners from Nanzhila Primary School, Itezhi-tezhi



Art-work by Alfred Mbewe from Chaisa Combined School Lusaka



Art-work by Alex Chabunda from Chaisa Combined School, Lusaka

# BIRDWATCH ZAMBIA SCHOOLS' ART COMPETITION - 2022

Theme: A Zambian bird that I know.

Eligibility: Children under the age of 14 years in 2022 ie. born no earlier than 2008

Closing Date: Pictures to be delivered to the BirdWatch office at 25 Joseph Mwilwa Road by 12th August 2022

Entries:

1. Only pupils themselves are allowed to work on the artwork. No help is to be given by family members, friends, or teachers.
2. Only one entry per child is allowed
3. The artwork must be in 2D. This means they must be on paper and not constructed or sculptured.
4. The pictures can be in pencil, charcoal, colours, markers, paint, or mixed media
5. Pictures can be any shape but no bigger than A3 size
6. Each entry is to be accompanied by an artist's statement of at least 10 words and not more than 200 words detailing how the picture relates to the theme.
7. Each entry is to be accompanied by the entrant's details (full names, grade, school, and teacher's number/email address).

Judging: This will be done by members of BirdWatch Zambia staff and results will be announced on 15th September 2022. There will be a display of some of the artworks at East Park Shopping Mall in Lusaka.

Prizes: Depending on the number of entries prizes will be grouped into age groups and a prize will be given to winners and runners-up. Please make sure your name, date of birth, and School are on the back of the picture.

A separate piece of paper should have a short write-up about the bird you have chosen, how you know it and where you have seen it. Extra marks will be given for this.

## For more information contact;



+260978718474



0211 239 420

