

Birds of the Kilombero Valley Floodplains Ramsar Site Tanzania

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Abstract

Introduction

Conservation and management of wetlands and their biodiversity have been identified as priority area for action in international conventions and national policies. Wetlands provide important habitats to many bird species but are also under threat from human-caused degradation. Over the past 20 years Tanzania has been running a Sustainable Wetlands Management Program (SWMP) aimed at sustainable management and wise use of wetlands, Tanzania has established four Ramsar sites, Lake Natron basin, Malagarasi-Moyowosi Wetlands, Kilombero Valley Floodplains and Rufiji-Mafia-Kilwa Marine Ramsar Site as wetlands of international importance based on their significance in biodiversity. There is much relevant data on the occurrence of biodiversity of the wetlands generated during their establishment. However these data are held scattered in a variety of sources and in incompatible formats, making it difficult to access or use, for sustainable management of the Ramsar wetlands.

The Kilombero Valley Floodplain Ramsar site in Tanzania located between 8°40'0"S and 36°10'0"E and covering an area of 7967 km², is a Ramsar site and an Important Bird Area (IBA) with high biodiversity has been subject to an increasing level of disturbance. It harbors the endemic Kilombero Weaver, Kilombero Cisticola and White-tailed Cisticola, as well as several other species of local, national and global importance. The study was conducted in the Kilombero Valley Floodplain Wetland in Morogoro region, southern-central Tanzania to establish the bird species richness, collate/collect and publish the occurrence of bird species in the area.



Table 1: Bird Species Richness and Status in the Kilombero Ramsar Site

Species Richness	119
Family Richness	42
Endemics	4

Results

We identified a total of 119 bird species belonging to 42 bird families with 4 birds that are endemic to the wetland including the Kilombero Weaver (*Ploceus burnieri*), Kilombero Cisticola; White tailed Cisticola and Zanzibar bishop. The Kilombero Cisticola is a recently described Tanzanian endemic restricted to the Kilombero valley floodplains.

Conclusion

The bird species richness and bird family richness in the Ramsar Site are high with high conservation value indicated by the endemic fauna species. Monitoring bird diversity in the wetland is important to determine changes associated with management interventions and understand the status of the endemic avifauna



Kilombero weaver



Kilombero Cisticola