

Zimbabwe's Important Bird Areas: National Status Report 2008



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Acronyms

BLAPS-BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat

CBD- Convention on Biological Diversity

IBA- Important Bird Areas

IUCN- International Union for the Conservation of Nature

NBSAP- National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan

PA- Protected Area

RSPB- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Executive Summary

The monitoring of Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in Zimbabwe is a contribution towards reducing the rate of biodiversity loss in the country as well as achieving some of Millennium Development Goals especially to ensure environmental sustainability. These long term objectives will be met through instituting effective monitoring systems in important sites for biodiversity conservation. The monitoring of IBAs in Zimbabwe is also part of BirdLife Zimbabwe's 5-year strategy to conserve species, habitats, sites and working with people. Monitoring feedback will assist Protected Areas (PAs) management authorities and other stakeholders in the implementation of conservation projects.

There are 20 IBAs in Zimbabwe that were identified using BirdLife International criteria. Seventeen IBAs are in Protected Areas (National Parks, Recreational Park, Safari Areas, Forest Reserves, Botanical Reserves and Private Nature Reserves) and three IBAs are in non-Protected Areas. Eleven IBAs represented in Protected Areas and one IBA in non Protected Areas were monitored in 2008. The source of data is mainly the staff from the Parks and Wildlife Management Authority, Forestry Commission, Allied Timbers Holdings Pvt Ltd and BirdLife Zimbabwe. Site biodiversity monitoring teams in eleven IBAs in Protected Areas were trained in IBA monitoring using the global monitoring framework. The results of the monitoring effort presented in this first national status report are reflective of the condition of twelve sites in terms of habitats of important birds.

The general state of IBA/PAs in 2008 is poor (1.36 ± 0.15). About 64% of the IBAs are in poor state and 36% of the IBAs are in moderate state. IBAs that have maintained poor state since 2001 are Middle Zambezi Valley, Matobo Hills and Stapleford Forest. IBAs that have deteriorated from near favourable (moderate) state to poor state since 2001 are Nyanga Mountains; Chimanimani Mountains; Robert Mcllwaine Recreational Park and Save-Runde junction. Batoka Gorge has deteriorated from a favourable (good) state to near favourable state. There is generally a decline in the condition of IBAs since 2001. There are two IBAs that have improved from poor state in 2001 to moderate state in 2008. These are Hwange National Park and Chizarira National Park. Chirinda Forest is the only IBA that has maintained a near favourable state since 2001.

There is generally high pressure (-2.09 ± 0.21) facing the IBA/PAs in Zimbabwe. About 27% of the IBAs face very high threat status, 55% of IBAs face high threat status and 18% of the IBAs face medium threat status. Pressures in IBAs have increased since 2001. This could be the possible reason for the general decline in site condition since 2001. The most common threats in IBAs are natural system modifications through fire and reduction in land management; invasive plants such as wattle, pine and water hyacinth; agriculture expansion into PAs and over-exploitation of natural resources.

The Protected Areas management authorities have moderately responded to the pressures in IBAs. There is some improvement in conservation response since 2001. In Driefontein Grasslands, a non-protected IBA, the site-based conservation groups has demonstrated a low response to the high pressures and very poor condition of the site.

Continued monitoring of IBAs will help to detect and act upon the threats in good time. Decision makers and site management authorities can also plan conservation work based on the monitoring results. The results of these initial assessments can be compared with future status of IBAs in order to measure the conservation efforts.

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1.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 Introduction

Important Bird Areas (IBAs) are sites of international significance in terms of birds that they support, chosen using BirdLife International criteria based on vulnerability and irreplaceability. Sites are designated as IBAs if they hold globally threatened bird species, restricted-range bird species, biome-restricted bird species and congregations of a significant number of terrestrial or water birds. The areas also have to be large enough to support self-sustaining bird populations for which they are important. IBAs also shelter a wide range of other taxa and they form part of Key Biodiversity Areas.

The IBA programme in Africa was launched in 1993 with support from BirdLife International. This programme seeks to identify, document, protect, monitor and work towards the conservation and sustainable management of globally important areas for bird conservation (Fishpool and Evans, 2001). Through the IBA initiative more than 1 000 IBAs have been documented in Africa and its associated islands to date. Some of the priority sites for conservation are in Protected Areas and some are in areas that are not legally protected. The IBA programme also guides the implementation of national conservation strategies, through the promotion and development of national Protected Area programmes. It is also intended to assist the conservation activities of national biodiversity monitoring institutions and contributors.

Important Bird Areas are practical tools for long term biodiversity conservation, as birds are good indicators of biodiversity. According to Bibby (1999) birds are the most reliable indicators of terrestrial biological richness and environmental conditions in the world. IBA monitoring promotes the long term conservation of birds, sites, habitats and improves the livelihood status of people. People derive benefits from IBAs through employment opportunities and the ecological services provided by these unique habitats.

Important Bird Areas the world over are however constantly under pressure from a wide range of anthropogenic and natural threats. These threats or pressures are assessed according to their timing, scope and severity. Biodiversity continues to decline in Zimbabwe and other African countries, although countries that are signatories to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) are required to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010. This is primarily due to limitations in resources, which is a common phenomenon in most developing countries. In order to empower developing countries to meet the CBD obligations, the European Commission is supporting biodiversity-rich and resource-poor African countries to meet their obligations under this convention. Zimbabwe is one of the eight African countries that have received support from the European Commission through the RSPB, the BirdLife International partner in the United Kingdom, to monitor IBAs in Protected Areas.

Zimbabwe has identified a total of 20 IBAs distributed throughout the country. The sites are in both protected and non protected areas and they offer unique breeding, wintering or migrating habitats to the world's birds. Some of Zimbabwe's IBAs in Protected Areas have been monitored over a number of years by the responsible management authorities. However there have been some inconsistencies in the levels and methods of monitoring over the years. The monitoring is

not continuous and also not centrally coordinated. There is therefore a need to continuously monitor the sites in order to detect and act upon the threats in good time.

The IBA programme requires working in partnership with other organizations, especially site management authorities. The intention of this is to ensure that biodiversity monitoring is institutionalized as a core activity of management authorities and other interested stakeholders and is effectively coordinated. Institutionalization of monitoring is based on the principle that monitoring is participatory. Those collecting the data should own it and contribute to the provision of national results to regional and global levels through BirdLife partners and other structures.

BirdLife Zimbabwe is collaborating with key Protected Areas management authorities in Zimbabwe to monitor eleven IBAs in Protected Areas. The institutions are the Parks and Wildlife Management Authority, Forestry Commission and Allied Timber Holdings Pvt Ltd. The capacity in those areas has been developed for long-term site monitoring and conservation. The eleven IBAs in Protected Areas being monitored are Nyanga Mountains, Stapleford Forest, Chimanimani Mountains, Chirinda Forest, Hwange National Park, Chizarira National Park, Batoka Gorge, Middle Zambezi Valley, Robert Mcllwaine Recreational Park, Matobo Hills and Save-Runde junction. Driefontein Grasslands is a non-Protected Area being monitored by BLZ and community conservation groups. The main focus on Protected Areas is for the long-term conservation of biodiversity.

The selected IBAs are being monitored using the global monitoring framework developed by BirdLife International. The framework ensures that adaptive management and research frameworks are developed and implemented. Data and information are gathered chiefly by site monitoring teams from Protected Areas management staff, bird watchers and to some extent community-based groups known as Site Support Groups (SSGs). However, in most cases the SSGs have limited access to Protected Areas. Their monitoring work is restricted to parts of the IBA that are outside Protected Areas. BirdLife Zimbabwe is coordinating the monitoring of IBAs in Zimbabwe and is the current repository of data and information.

1.2 Purpose of the Status and Trends Report

The status and trends report intends to highlight any major changes at Important Bird Areas. A detailed 'health check' of the IBAs highlighting indicators of state, pressure and response provides an overview of IBA monitoring findings and makes recommendations to Protected Areas management authorities. The urgency for conservation action at priority sites for biodiversity conservation is reflected in the report. The report is also an information tool for a variety of stakeholders that are involved in IBA conservation.

1.3 Monitoring Important Bird Areas

(a) What is monitoring?

Monitoring refers to the repeated measurement of one or more variables over time in order to ascertain the extent of deviation or changes from the predetermined standard or norm. Monitoring can be referred to as surveillance carried out with an objective in mind, and is goal-oriented. Variables that can be monitored include bird populations; habitat area and condition; and conservation activities, among others.

The monitoring process starts by designing a monitoring scheme. Several steps that are taken include:

- identifying the problem
- defining the objectives
- assessing methods and choosing variables
- assessing feasibility and cost effectiveness
- data collection, interpretation and reporting
- application

Monitoring is a process and a means to appropriate conservation action. Past experiences have shown that the feedback to management is however often too weak. This project seeks to ensure that information generated from monitoring is effectively applied to improve site management.

(b) Why monitor IBAs?

Monitoring ensures that the performance of any management action on a site is evaluated in terms of cost and time. Without monitoring, it is difficult to tell whether the action is effective or not. Changes in ecosystems could also be detected and acted upon in good time. Monitoring also ensures adept understanding of ecosystem structure and function. In IBA monitoring, sites are evaluated in terms of important birds they support and their habitats. Monitoring;

- Provides up-to-date information on pressures to the IBAs, and provide timely warning and action
- Assesses the effectiveness of conservation efforts e.g. implementation of conservation projects
- Expands and updates site data e.g. mapping of site boundaries will assist in the management of the area
- Enhances and strengthens institutional partnerships
- Provides a tool for creating awareness and a training strategy
- Provides information on birds as biodiversity indicators
- Contributes to Convention on Biological Diversity reports
- Ensures that the IBA criteria is still being met
- Strengthens international advocacy and fundraising at regional and global levels

(c) Monitoring in Zimbabwe

Important Bird Areas in Zimbabwe have been monitored over a number of years, some even before the adoption of the IBA concept e.g. Matobo Hills have 49 years of data collection. BirdLife Zimbabwe has been receiving data and information from some of the IBAs over the years. The country has passed through various stages of the IBA process from understanding of the IBA concept to monitoring of these sites. The 2001 report on the condition of Protected Areas in Africa provides the baseline of Zimbabwe's IBA monitoring findings using the global monitoring system.

In the current project, structures were put in place to monitor IBAs through Protected Areas management authorities. Efforts are being made to engage other stakeholders involved in education and awareness of biodiversity issues; conservation action at IBAs; environmental policy formulation and updating; and compilation of national CBD reports, among others.

The monitoring of IBAs in Zimbabwe is at the institutional level. The national committee for biodiversity monitoring has not been active in recent years but there are plans to resuscitate the committee through the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Management. The national committee plays a crucial role in spearheading national conservation programmes. BirdLife Zimbabwe will continue to monitor IBAs and looks forward to developing a National IBA Conservation Strategy that seeks to achieve the goals and objectives of the National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan (NBSAP) that was produced in 1998. There is a call to revise the NBSAP to address the status and trends in national biodiversity, major threats to biodiversity and conservation gaps.

1.4 Protected Areas system in Zimbabwe

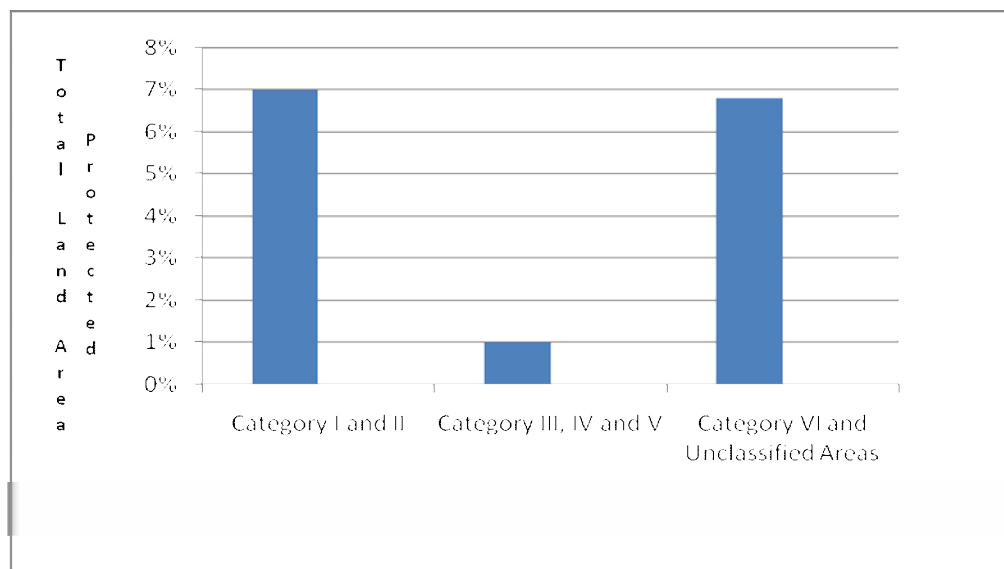


Figure 1. Extent of Protected Areas in Zimbabwe by IUCN categories (Source: EarthTrends 2003)

The total area of Protected Areas in Zimbabwe according to 2003 records is 5 752 000 hectares representing 249 PAs (Earth Trends 2003). Categories I and II, which comprise nature reserves, wilderness areas and national parks are 2 717 000 hectares in extent. Categories III, IV and V are 386 000 hectares in area and comprise natural monuments, species management areas and protected landscapes. Category VI and Undefined Areas, which comprise areas managed for sustainable use are 2 650 000 hectares.

1.5 Distribution of IBAs in Zimbabwe

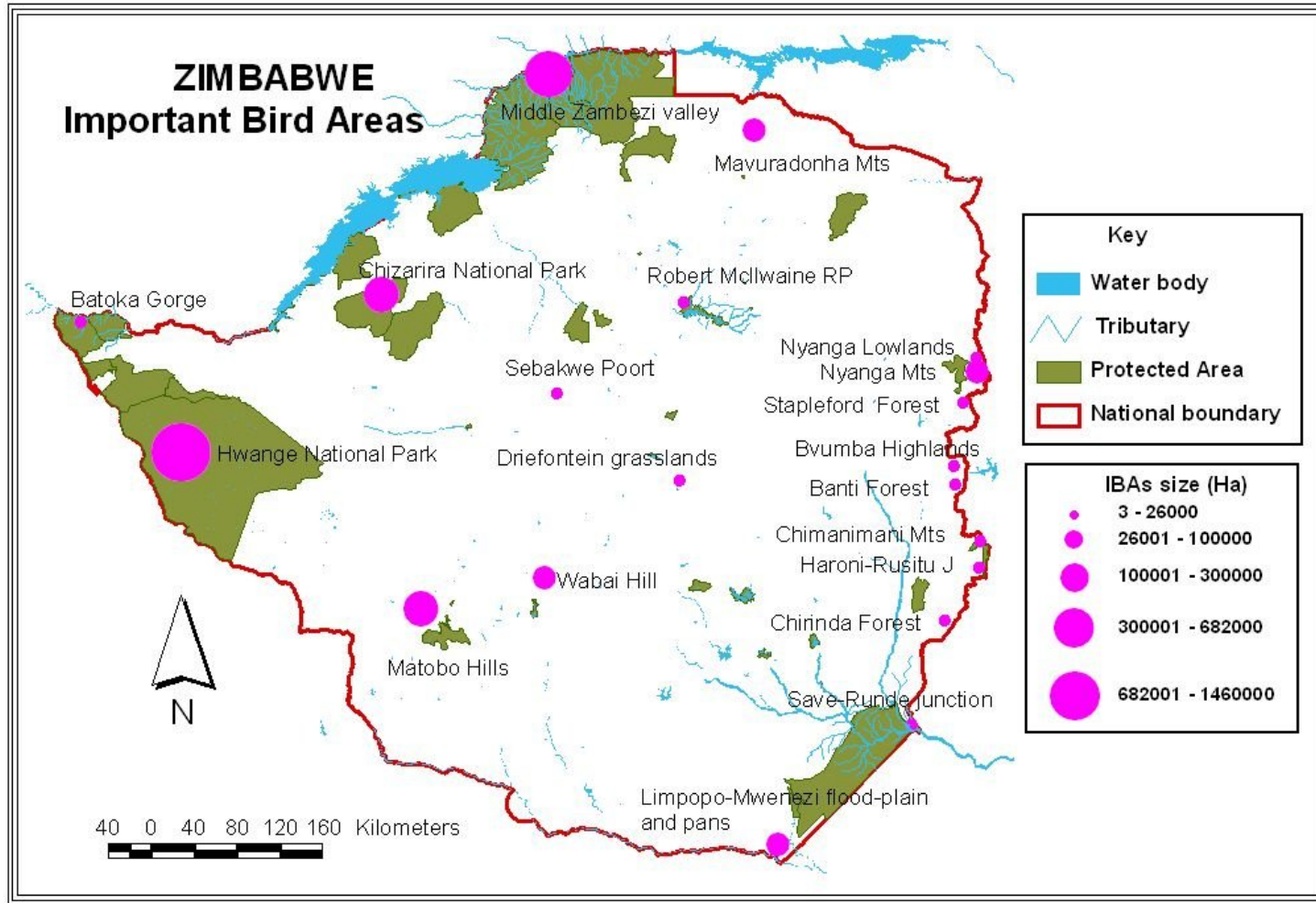


Figure 2. Important Bird Areas in Zimbabwe

1.6 Important Bird Areas represented in Zimbabwe's Protected Areas

Legislation governing Protected Areas has not changed significantly since 2003, although there are noticeable environmental changes that have taken place. Among Zimbabwe's 20 IBAs, 17 are represented in Protected Areas or have some form of protection. However there is some degree of overlap into non-protected areas for some of the IBAs. Table 1 below shows Zimbabwe's 20 IBAs and their protection status.

Table 1. IBAs and their protection status

IBA Code	Name of IBA	Protected Area System	IBA Code	Name of IBA	Protected Area System
ZW001	Nyanga Mountains	National Park	ZW002	Nyanga Lowlands/Honde Valley	National Park, Private Nature Reserve
ZW003	Stapleford Forest	Demarcated Forest	ZW004	Bvumba Highlands	Botanical Reserve
ZW005	Banti Forest Reserve	Forest Reserve	ZW006	Chimanimani Mountains	National Park
ZW007	Haroni-Rusitu Junction and Botanical Reserves	Botanical Reserves	ZW008	Chirinda Forest	Demarcated Forest
ZW009	Hwange National Park	National Park	ZW010	Chizarira National Park	National Park
ZW011	Batoka Gorge	National Park	ZW012	Middle Zambezi Valley	National Park, Safari Areas, World Heritage Site
ZW013	Robert Mcllwaine Recreational Park	Recreational Park	ZW014	Sebakwe Poort	Private Nature Reserve
ZW015	Wabai Hill (Debshan Ranch)	None	ZW016	Matobo Hills	National Park, Recreational Park
ZW017	Driefontein grasslands	None	ZW018	Limpopo-Mwenezi flood-plain and pans	None
ZW019	Mavuradonha Mountains	Private Nature/ Game Reserve	ZW020	Save-Runde Junction	National Park

There are three IBAs that are in non-protected areas as shown on Table 1. BirdLife Zimbabwe is monitoring 11 IBAs in PAs and one in non-protected areas.

2.0 METHODS

2.1 IBA Monitoring Approach

The global monitoring framework provides guidelines on how the scoring system works, and also outlines principles for designing and implementing a sustainable monitoring process (BirdLife International, 2006). BirdLife Zimbabwe has adopted the basic IBA monitoring, which involves awarding simple scores for selected indicators of pressure, state and response (see Annex 2 for the IBA monitoring form). Basic IBA monitoring is simple, robust and inexpensive, thus ensures sustainability. It is based on a regular review of information from the field and ideally this should happen once a year. The basic level monitoring has been applied in the monitoring of twelve IBAs in Zimbabwe. Large changes in site condition are relatively easy to assess and form the basis for ‘basic’ IBA monitoring, e.g. deforestation of a woodland.

In basic monitoring a standardized way is used to assign scores for indicators of threats to IBAs (**Pressure**), indicators to the condition of IBAs (**State**) and conservation actions taken at IBAs (**Response**). The State-Pressure-Response model (Figure 3) was used as the basis for site monitoring. A set of core variables and indicators are selected from an infinite number of environmental variables and indicators that can be monitored in order to attain efficiency and effectiveness in resource use. Pressure indicators identify and track major threats to the IBAs e.g. pollution, agricultural expansion and invasive species. State indicators refer to the condition of the site with respect to its important bird populations. There might also be measures of the extent and quality of the habitat required by these birds. Response indicators identify and track conservation actions e.g. changes in conservation designation and implementation of conservation actions.

Monitoring the pressure, state and response in IBAs aims to provide information on what is affecting IBAs, what is happening to the IBA in terms of important bird populations and their habitat area and quality, and which conservation efforts are having the desired effects. Indicators that are appropriate for IBA conservation goals are chosen within the pressure-state-response model. A good indicator will respond clearly to changes e.g. water level is a good indicator of wetland condition. The relationship between indicators of pressure, state and response is illustrated in Figure 3 below;

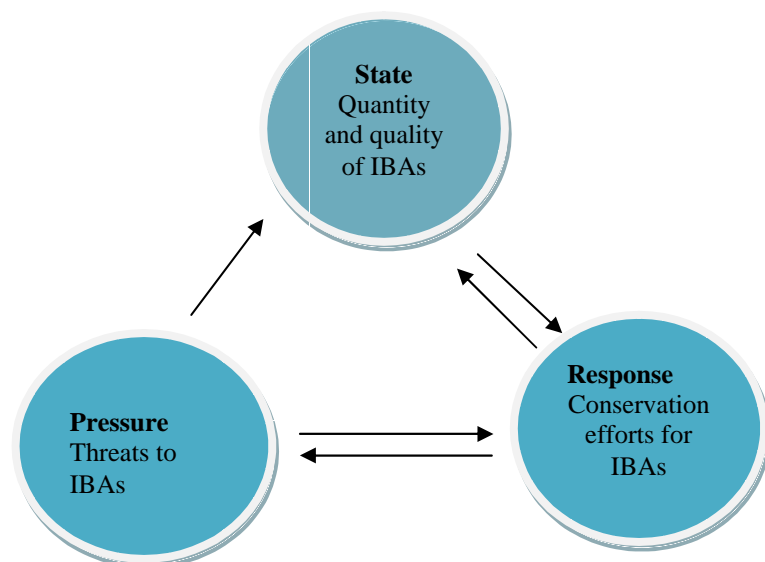


Figure 3. The relationship between indicators of Pressure, State and Response

The pressures that are subjected to IBAs affect the condition of sites. Pressures on IBAs promptly allow a conservation response, which aims to reduce the level of pressures on the state of IBAs. The condition of sites determines the type of conservation action to be taken by management staff. Conservation responses should aim to improve the condition of IBAs in terms of important bird populations and their habitat quantity and quality.

It is appropriate to monitor at least one indicator each of pressure, state and response. The weakest link approach is used and it suggests that the worst case sets the score for the site e.g. the least intact habitat or the most threatened species. Assessment of IBAs may be based on habitat or species, depending upon data availability. Threats are scored according to their timing, scope and severity, in how they affect trigger species at the site. Over a number of years, information on pressures for a site is updated and trends can be established. Scoring the state of IBAs is based on the percentage of potential population or habitat remaining of worst-off species or habitat. Scores for conservation response are based on the level of formal conservation designation, management planning and implementation of conservation action.

2.2 Sources of monitoring data

The data for this report comes from eleven PAs and one non-protected area. Site-based monitoring teams and other stakeholders were trained to apply the global monitoring system. Additional information was obtained from PAs records. The report contains information received for the 2008 monitoring period and this is compared with the 2001 baseline information.

2.3 Analysis and presentation approach

Data and information are presented graphically and in table formats. The scoring methodology and data analysis followed the State-Pressure-Response indices methodology developed by BirdLife International (BirdLife International, 2006).

All of the information provided was verified before analysis. Comparisons were made based on information extracted from published sources such as the Africa IBA Directory by Fishpool and Evans (2001) and the 2001 baseline report.

3.0 MONITORING RESULTS

3.1 General Status and Trends of IBAs

A total of eleven IBAs in Protected Areas were monitored. The IBA mean scores for state, pressure and response for 2008 are (1.36 ± 0.15) , (-2.09 ± 0.21) and (2.00 ± 0.00) respectively (Figure 4). The pressures on the IBAs are high, the general state of IBAs is poor and conservation response is moderate. In 2001 the mean scores for state, pressure and response for the eleven IBAs in Protected Areas were (1.64 ± 0.20) , (-1.64 ± 0.15) and (1.27 ± 0.14) respectively. In general the state of IBAs in 2001 was moderate, the pressure was medium and the conservation response was low.

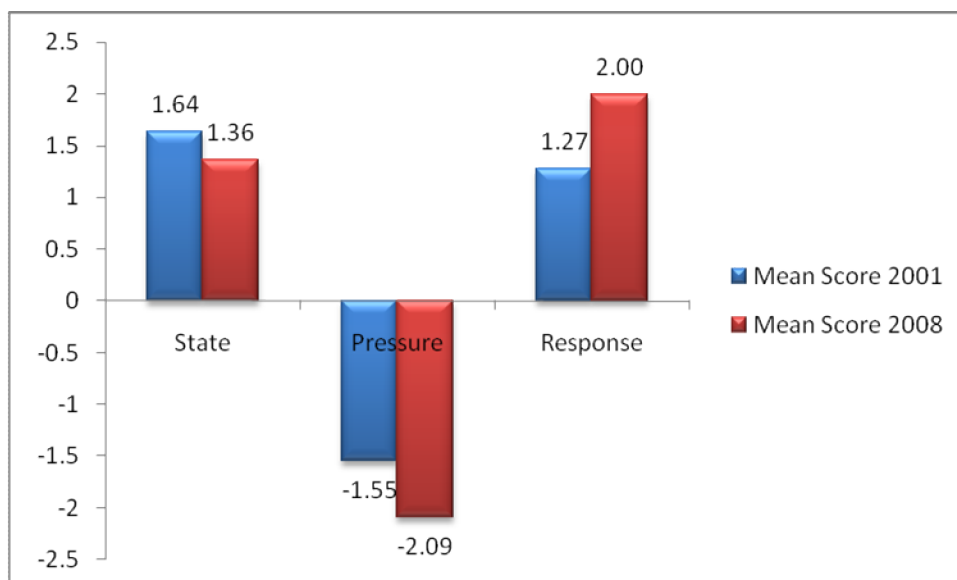


Figure 4. Comparison of State, Pressure and Response for IBAs in Protected Areas in 2001 and 2008, where (N=11).

3.2 State of IBAs for 2001 and 2008

Of the 11 IBAs in Protected Areas monitored in 2008, 63.6% of the IBAs were found to be in poor state and 36.3% of the IBAs were found to be in moderate state. In 2001, 9% of the IBAs were in good state, 45% in moderate state and 46% in poor state. Figure 5 below shows the state of IBAs in 2001 and 2008.

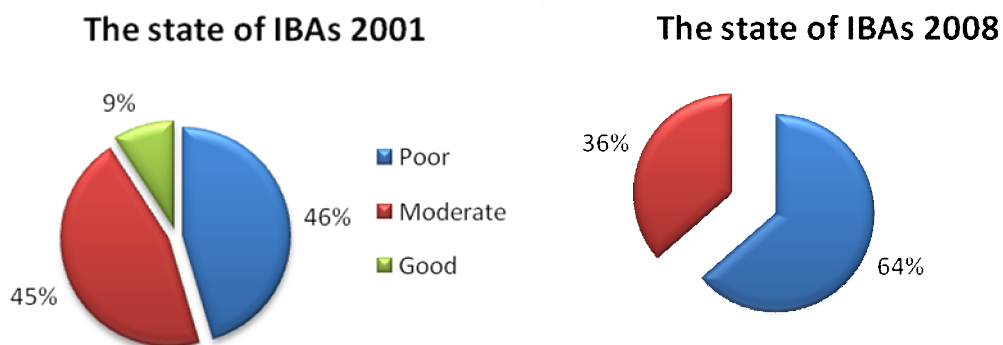


Figure 5. State of Zimbabwe's Protected Area IBAs

3.2.1 Comparison in state of IBAs for 2001 and 2008

Table 2. State of IBA/PAs in 2001 and 2008

IBA code	IBA name	2001 State	2008 State
ZW 001	Nyanga Mountains	Moderate	Poor
ZW 003	Stapleford Forest	Poor	Poor
ZW 006	Chimanimani Mountains	Moderate	Poor
ZW 008	Chirinda Forest	Moderate	Moderate
ZW 009	Hwange National Park	Poor	Moderate
ZW 010	Chizarira National Park	Poor	Moderate
ZW 011	Batoka Gorge	Good	Moderate
ZW 012	Middle Zambezi Valley	Poor	Poor
ZW 013	Robert Mcllwaine Recreational Park	Moderate	Poor
ZW 016	Matobo Hills	Poor	Poor
ZW 020	Save-Runde Junction	Moderate	Poor

The state of IBAs decreased from a mean score of 1.64 in 2001 to 1.36 in 2008 (N=11). This means that the condition of IBAs is deteriorating. In either case no IBA was regarded to be very poor. In 2001 the IBAs in the poor state were Stapleford Forest, Hwange National Park, Chizarira National Park, Middle Zambezi Valley and Matobo Hills. In 2008 the IBAs in the poor state were Nyanga Mountains, Stapleford Forest, Chimanimani Mountains, Middle Zambezi Valley, Robert Mcllwaine Recreational Park, Matobo Hills and Save-Runde Junction. The number of IBAs in the poor category has increased by two. Nyanga Mountains, Chimanimani Mountains, Chirinda Forest, Robert Mcllwaine Recreational Park and Save-Runde Junction were in moderate state in 2001. Chirinda Forest, Hwange National Park, Chizarira National Park and Batoka Gorge were in moderate condition in 2008.

3.3 Status and trends of Pressure on IBAs

The threat status of IBAs is derived from scoring threats in terms of their timing, scope and severity. These three are added together and termed the impact score and are used to derive the IBA threat status. The higher the score then the higher the IBA threat status score. In 2008 most of the IBAs (54.5%) had a high threat status, whilst 27.3% had a very high threat status and 18.2% had a medium threat status. Figure 6 below shows the status of pressures of IBAs in 2008.

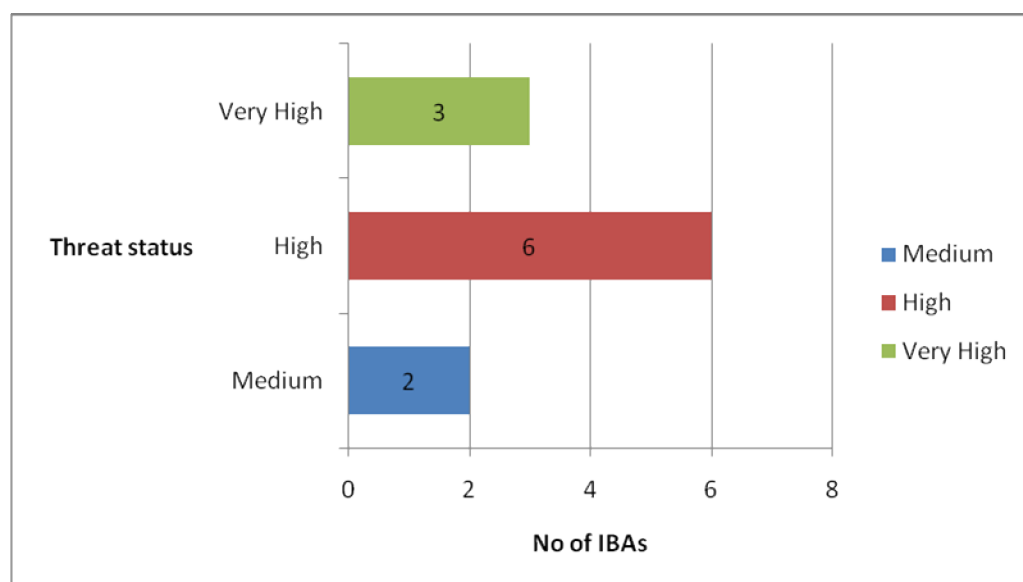


Figure 6. IBAs in the different pressure categories in 2008. (N=11).

IBAs that have very high threat status are Batoka Gorge, Robert Mcllwaine Recreational Park and Matobo Hills. IBAs that have a high threat status are Nyanga Mountains, Stapleford, Chimanimani Mountains, Hwange National Park, Middle Zambezi Valley and Save-Runde Junction. Chirinda Forest and Chizarira National Park are the IBAs with medium level of environmental pressures.

3.3.1 Distribution of pressure across IBAs in 2008

The most common threats across the IBAs are invasive species, natural system modifications (fire and reduction in land management); agricultural expansion and intensification; and over exploitation, persecution and control of species. Figure 7 illustrates the distribution of pressures across the eleven IBAs.

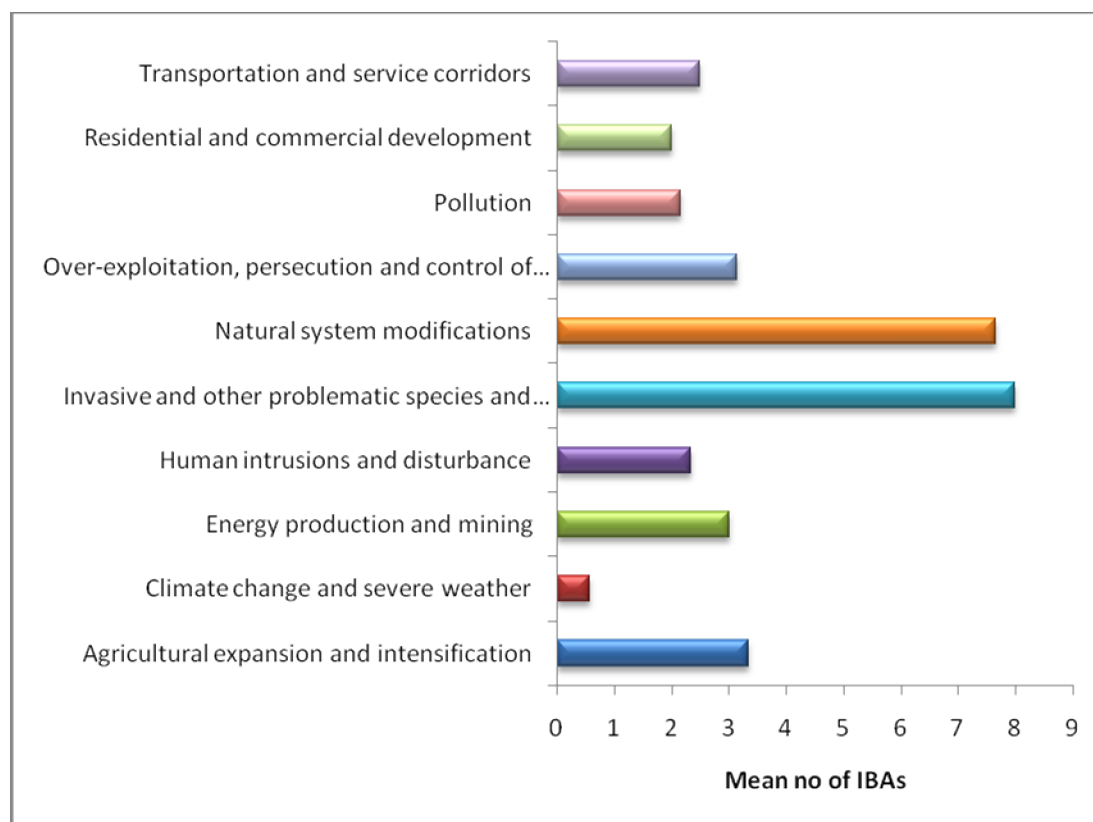


Figure 7. Distribution of major threat categories across IBAs in Protected Areas in 2008.

There are two threat levels; Threat level 1, which is a major/broad category of the threats and Threat Level 2, which is a more detailed individually named threat class (See annex 2). Figure 7 above shows the distribution of threat level 1. The two most common threat classes are invasives and natural system modifications. The rest of the level 1 threats affect less than four IBAs.

3.3.2 Major threats in IBAs in Protected Areas

3.3.2.1 Natural systems modification

A total of three classifications exist under this major threat level. These are fire and fire suppression, dams and water management and other ecosystem modifications. The one that is most significant is fire. Eleven IBAs in Protected Areas are threatened by fires. Fires occur especially during the dry season. No single IBA was spared from the effects of fire in 2008. The IBAs that suffered greatly from fires were Batoka Gorge and Matobo Hills. Fires had lower effects in Nyanga Mountains, Stapleford Forest, Hwange National Park, Middle Zambezi Valley and Save-Runde Junction. Chimanimani Mountains and Chizarira National Park were slightly affected by fires. The fires did occur in the latter IBAs but they were not very extensive.

3.3.2.2 Alien invasive species

Invasive species are found in 73% of the IBAs in Protected Areas. The IBAs that are seriously affected by the threat include Nyanga Mountains, Batoka Gorge and Robert Mcllwaine Recreational Park. Nyanga Mountains is affected by Pine and Wattle trees growing in the Afromontane grassland, which is the important habitat for the globally threatened Blue Swallow. Batoka Gorge and Robert Mcllwaine Recreational Park have the similar problem of alien invasive plants in the form of *Lantana camara* and water hyacinth respectively. Most of the shore and some bays at Robert Mcllwaine Recreational Park are covered in water hyacinth. This is promoted by the waste water, mainly sewage from the city of Harare as well as industrial effluent pouring into the Lake.

3.3.2.3 Agriculture intensification and expansion

The most common threat in the category is small holder grazing. This was recorded in nine out of the eleven IBAs. However smallholder grazing had low impact in 55% of the IBAs where this threat was recorded. The areas affected are Nyanga Mountains, Chirinda Forest, Chimanimani Mountains, Hwange National Park, Chizarira National Park and Save-Runde Junction. In 46% of the cases, smallholder grazing affected small areas of the IBAs including Stapleford Forest, Batoka Gorge, Middle Zambezi Valley and Matobo Hills.

3.3.3 Comparison of threat classes for 2001 and 2008

In 2001 four of the eleven IBAs in Protected Areas registered medium threat status. The remaining seven IBAs registered high threat status (Figure 8). The distribution of threats had changed by 2008, showing an increase in the IBA threat status. In 2001 no IBA recorded a very high threat status score. However in 2008 three IBAs are recorded very high threat status. These are Batoka Gorge, Robert Mcllwaine and Matobo Hills. The main pressures for these IBAs were transportation and service corridors through helicopter paths and fire at Batoka Gorge; invasive species and water pollution at Robert Mcllwaine Recreational Park; and fire, logging and effects of hunting and trapping of dassies at Matobo Hills. The threats have become more severe with time. The dassies are poached by the local people at Matobo Hills and are usually trapped for food. The logging that occurs is mainly for curio carvers mainly targeting trees such as *Azelia quanzensis* and *Pterocarpus angolensis*. Figure 8 shows comparison of different threat classes in 2001 and 2008.

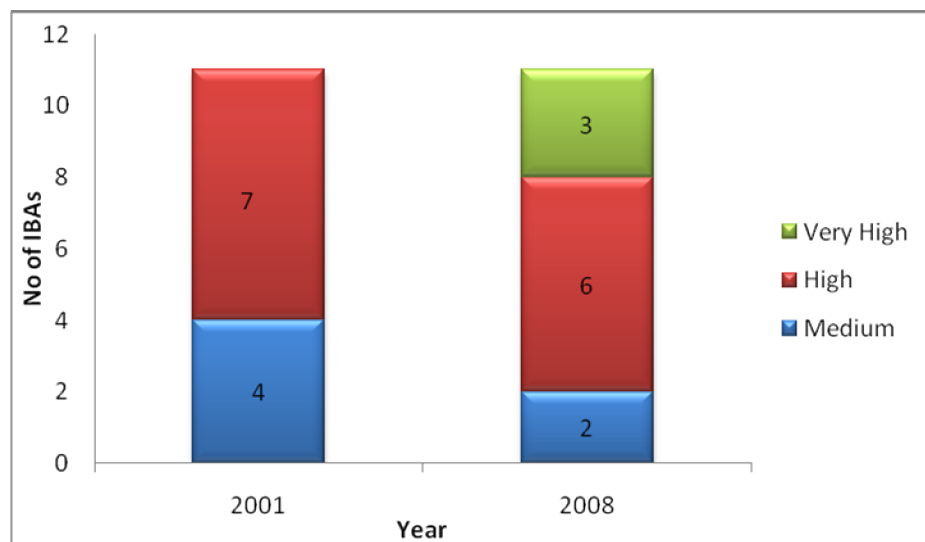


Figure 8. Comparison of different threat classes in 2001 and 2008

3.4 Conservation responses at IBAs

Response is assessed based on conservation designation, management planning and conservation action at IBAs. There is a general increase in conservation response from 2001 (1.27 ± 0.14) to 2008 (2.00 ± 0.00). The response is from low to moderate, showing that PAs management authorities are increasing their efforts especially in implementing conservation actions.

Most of the IBAs assessed were covered by appropriate conservation designation but the management plans were out of date. Substantive conservation actions that are being implemented in most of the IBAs include anti-poaching and law enforcement; fire management and general site and species management. Actions that are undertaken in collaboration with other conservation organizations include land and water management; species management; education and awareness; and research and surveys.

IBAs that have maintained a moderate response since 2001 are Hwange National Park, Middle Zambezi Valley and Save-Runde junction. The rest of the IBAs in Protected Areas have improved from low to moderate response since 2001. However the aggregated moderate response is being overshadowed by the high level of pressures at IBAs.

3.5 Analysis of results from non-protected IBA monitoring

3.5.1 Overall status of Driefontein Grasslands, 2008

The state of Driefontein Grasslands is very poor mainly due to agricultural intensification by local communities. Other pressures include smallholder grazing and uncontrolled fires. The pressures facing the IBA are high and conservation response is low.

3.5.2 Comparison of 2008 status between Driefontein Grasslands and Nyanga Mountains

Figure 9 shows the 2008 status of Driefontein Grasslands in comparison to Nyanga Mountains. The two are IBAs because they hold birds of global conservation concern using BirdLife International criteria and both contain extensive grassland areas. The protected and non-protected IBAs face similar magnitude of pressures. However Protected Areas have higher conservation actions than non-protected areas.

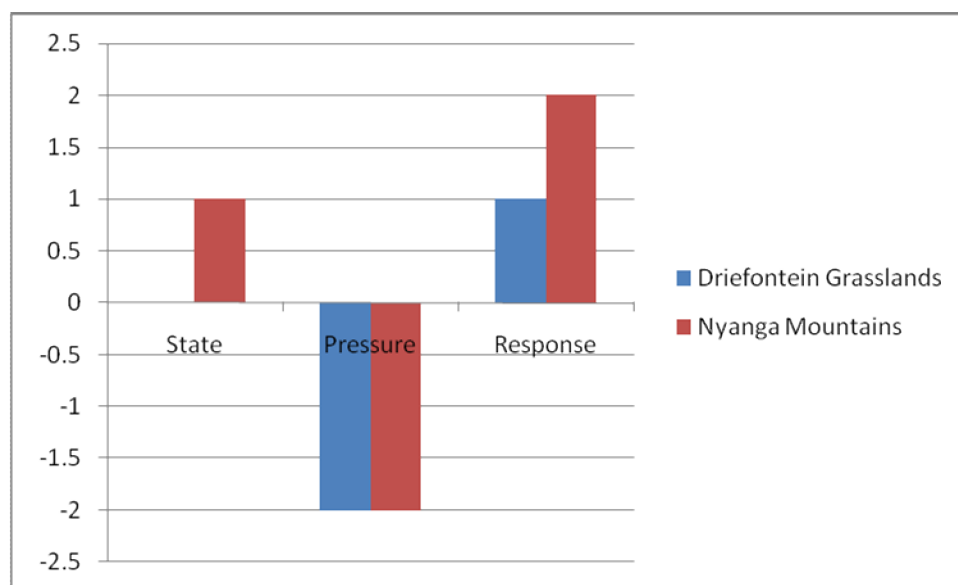


Figure 9. Comparison of 2008 status between Driefontein Grasslands and Nyanga Mountains

3.6 Caveats regarding how the findings should be used.

The findings from IBA monitoring are important for PAs management authorities for planning purposes, conservation action and as a tool for advocacy and fundraising. The national status reports should be used to adapt interventions accordingly. Stakeholder participation has to be mainstreamed in integrated conservation approach to ensure that resources are shared amongst conservation practitioners. Findings of IBA monitoring will enhance checks and balances on the health of important habitats.

However, there are potential problems associated with interpreting IBA monitoring findings. There are questions about how the IBA status changes with regards to changes in the status of specific habitats, referred to as important habitats. A badly degraded important habitat may change the conservation status of the entire site. It is also unclear to stakeholders how sensitive the IBA monitoring approach will be in detecting changes in trends over time, in the case of changes in expert assessors. However in the case of staff turnover newly-trained monitoring teams will be supplied with information from previous assessments and the monitoring continues. Therefore, consideration needs to be taken that the trends reported are representative of real trends.

4.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The high pressures facing IBAs require more conservation measures to be implemented by Protected Areas management authorities and local communities at Driefontein Grasslands. Habitat management programmes targeting conservation of wetlands, woodlands, montane grasslands and forests should be among conservation priorities of site managers. The threats facing most of the IBAs such as veld fires, reduction in land management and invasive species may require additional resources e.g. for mechanical or chemical removal of the water hyacinth at Robert Mcllwaine Recreational Park. The PAs management authorities especially Parks and Wildlife Management Authority and Allied Timber Holdings Pvt Ltd should intensify field patrols to increase land management.

IBAs that have experienced very high threat levels are Batoka Gorge, Robert Mcllwaine and Matobo Hills. Recreational activities in form of helicopter flights along the Batoka Gorge should be managed to minimize disturbance to the Taita Falcon. Measures to reduce sewerage and industrial effluents have to be put in place to reduce the proliferation of the water hyacinth at Robert Mcllwaine Recreational Park. Effective fire management plans have to be developed for Matobo Hills and other IBAs. It is thought that high fire frequency at Matobo Hills is causing bush encroachment in the grasslands.

Nyanga Mountains, Stapleford Forest, Chimanimani Mountains, Hwange National Park, Middle Zambezi Valley and Save-Runde Junction have high threat levels. The Protected Areas management authorities in those IBAs should always be on the alert of pressures and extent their coverage in land management. Management authority at Stapleford Forest in particular should aim to maintain the integrity of natural conservation areas set aside for biodiversity conservation by reducing incidences of fire and invasive species. The veld fires also threaten the vast areas set aside for wood plantations in the IBA.

Habitat conditions of IBAs such as Hwange National Park and Chizarira National Park have improved since 2001. However the elephant populations of the two sites as well as Save-Runde junction should be monitored as the species cause ecosystem modifications. Although climate change was not assessed thoroughly in IBAs, there is need to develop climate change driven policies and adaptive management strategies in the future.

Site management plans for most of the IBAs also need to be updated. Site management planning should address conservation priority issues. Protected Areas management authorities have all slightly improved in site conservation response since 2001 but there is need to step up conservation efforts.

There is also need for continued involvement of Site Support Groups (SSGs) at Driefontein Grasslands namely Daviot, Chipisa and Shashe in IBA conservation activities, including environmental education; site monitoring and protection; reduction in wetland cultivation and restoration of degraded wetlands. The present conservation activities at Driefontein Grasslands are low in the face of high pressures and very poor condition of the site.

The government and other stakeholders should continue to support conservation activities of Protected Areas and non-protected areas, working towards reconstruction of national biodiversity committee, fulfilling the national obligations of the CBD and environmental sustainability.

BirdLife Zimbabwe should ensure that all stakeholders understand and adopt the concept of IBA monitoring. There is need to train more people in IBA monitoring, to continue in coordinating national IBA monitoring programme and to extent monitoring into other non-protected IBAs. There is also need to influence the resuscitation of a vibrant national biodiversity monitoring network through the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Management. BirdLife Zimbabwe will continue to provide monitoring feedback to PAs management authorities.

There are challenges in addressing some of the advocacy issues such as protection of non-protected IBAs due to lack of adequate monitoring data. IBA monitoring should extent to all non-protected areas in future so that advocacy for their protection and long-term biodiversity conservation is based on quality data.

In IBA monitoring the emphasis is on using key birds or their habitats when assigning status scores. This is because birds are good indicators of biodiversity, and they represent a diverse of habitats. However there is need for collaboration with other biodiversity monitoring institutions working on other taxa. The accuracy of site data can be improved by increasing the number of people collecting the data and also verifying the data before analysis. Formalizing partnerships with other stakeholders will also ensure that IBA monitoring is sustainable.

There is also an urgent need for decision makers to review the status of some Protected Areas in Zimbabwe in terms of designation especially after the Land Reform Programme, which has resulted in alterations in land use throughout the country.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The status of IBAs reflects the urgent need for conservation of sites and habitats that are subjected to numerous pressures. The general status of the IBA network in Zimbabwe is characterised by poor condition of sites, high level of threats and moderate conservation response taking place. The high pressures facing IBAs is a threat to national biodiversity conservation. Major pressures affecting IBAs are natural system modifications through mainly uncontrolled veld fires and reduction of land management; invasive plant species; agricultural expansion and intensification; and over-exploitation of wild biological resources such as firewood collection.

Conservation efforts should be directed where they are urgently needed especially on restoration of woodlands, montane grasslands and wetlands on sites. A very small area under threat may need attention in good time to in order to conserve biodiversity. Sites in urgent need of response to very high pressures are Batoka Gorge, Matobo Hills, Robert Mcllwaine Recreational Park and Driefontein Grasslands. A comparison of the status of Nyanga Mountains, a Protected Area, and Driefontein Grasslands, a non-protected area, shows that non-protected IBAs may require even more resources and urgent protection for effective conservation action to take place. Important Bird Areas monitoring in Zimbabwe will contribute towards the implementation of national conservation strategy.

6.0 REFERENCES

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Annexes

Annex 1: Threats/pressures in Important Bird Areas in 2008

The table shows the threat impact level. The higher the level, the greater the magnitude of the threat.

Threat Level 1	Threat Level 2	ZW001	ZW003	ZW006	ZW008	ZW009	ZW010	ZW011	ZW012	ZW013	ZW016	ZW020
Agricultural expansion and intensification	Perennial non-timber crops-Agro industry plantations	Low	High	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	Smallholder grazing	Low	Medium	*	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	*	Medium	Low
	Annual crops-Smallholder farming	Low	Low	*	*	*	*	High	Low	*	*	*
	Agro industry farming	Low	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	Agro industry plantations	Low	High	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	Industrial aquaculture	Low	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Residential and commercial development	Tourism & recreational developmt	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	Medium	Low	*	*
	Rural settlements	*	*	*	*	*	Low	*	*	*	*	*
Energy production and mining	Mining and quarrying	*	*	Low	*	*	*	*	High	*	High	
Transportation and service corridors	Roads and railroads	Low	*	*	*	Low	*	*	*	*	*	*
	Flight paths	*	*	*	*	*	*	High	*	*	*	*

Threat Level 1	Threat Level 2	ZW001	ZW003	ZW006	ZW008	ZW009	ZW010	ZW011	ZW012	ZW013	ZW016	ZW020
Over-exploitation, persecution and control of species	Indirect mortality - fishing	*	*	*	*	*	*	High	*	Medium	High	*
	Habitat effect-hunting & trapping	*	*	*	*	*	*	Medium	*	*	*	*
	Fishing and harvesting aquatic resources	*	*	*	*	*	*	Medium	Low	*	High	*
	Gathering plants	Low	Low	Low	Medium	Low	Low	Medium	*	Medium	Medium	*
	Logging	*	High	*	*	Low	*	*	Low	*	Medium	*
Human intrusions and disturbance	Recreational activities	Low	*	*	*	Medium	*	Very high	*	Medium	*	*
	Military exercises	Low	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	Work & other activities	*	Medium	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Natural system modifications	Fires	High	High	Low	Medium	High	Low	Very high	High	Medium	Very High	Medium
	Dams & water mgt	*	*	*	*	High	*	*	Low	*	*	
	Other ecosystem modifications	Medium	Low	High	*	Medium	Medium	*	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
Invasives and other problematic species and genes	Invasive alien species	High	Medium	Low	Medium	*	*	Very high	Medium	Very high	Low	*

Threat Level 1	Threat Level 2	ZW001	ZW003	ZW006	ZW008	ZW009	ZW010	ZW011	ZW012	ZW013	ZW016	ZW020
Pollution	Domestic and urban waste water	Low	*	*	*	*	*	High	Very high	*	*	*
	Noise pollution	Low	Low	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	Industrial effluents	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
	Agriculture effluents	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	Low	Very high	*	*
	Agriculture practices	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		High		High
	Air borne pollutants	*	*	*	*	*	*	Medium		*	*	*
Geological Events	Earth tremor	Low	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Climate change and severe weather	Extreme Temperature Frost	Low	*	*	*	Medium	*	*	High	*	*	*
	Storms and floods	*	*	*	Medium	*	*	*	*	High	*	Medium
	Droughts	*	*	*	*	Medium	*	*	Medium	*	*	Medium

Key

*The threat was not recorded.

Annex 2: Important Bird Areas monitoring form

BirdLife Zimbabwe
 P.O Box RVL 100 Runiville
 Harare
 Tel (04) 481496/ 490208
 Email: birds@zol.co.zw



Monitoring Important Bird Areas

Help to monitor IBAs-
 Key sites for biodiversity
 Conservation

PLEASE:

- ⇒ Answer the questions below
- ⇒ Give details wherever possible
- ⇒ Return a completed form once a year if you are resident at a site or a regular visitor, but note that relevant information is helpful, at any time.
- ⇒ Consider making use of sketch maps as an additional means of recording key results, such as the precise location & extent of threat, sightings of key species, extent of particular habitats, routes taken and areas surveyed etc.
- ⇒ Return the completed form to BirdLife Zimbabwe using above details.

PART 1. ESSENTIAL INFORMATION (Please use a different form for each site)

Name of the IBA _____ Date _____

Your name _____ Postal address _____

Telephone/fax _____ email _____

What does this form cover? (tick one box)

- (a) the whole IBA (b) just part of the IBA
 If (b), which part/how much of the whole area?

Do you live at or around the IBA?

- (a) Yes (b) No
 If (b) when did you visit the IBA and for how long?

PART II. MONITORING THE IBA

You don't need to answer all the questions or fill in all the tables- please just put down the information that you have available

THREATS TO THE IBA ('PRESSURE')

General comments on threats to the site and any changes since your last assessment (if relevant):

In the table opposite and overleaf, please score each threat that is relevant to the important birds at the IBA, based on your observations and information, for Timing, Scope and Severity. In the 'details' column, please explain your scoring and make any other comments. Please note any changes in individual threats since the last assessment. If threats apply only to particular species, please say so.

Use the following guidelines to assign scores for Timing, Scope and Severity. The numbers are there to help you score, but are intended as guidance only: you don't need exact measurements to assign a score. For scoring combined threats, Timing, Scope and Severity scores should either be equal to or more than the highest scores for individual threats; scores cannot be less than those allocated to individual threats.

Timing of selected threat	Timing score
Happening now	3
Likely in short term (within 4 years)	2
Likely in long term (beyond 4 years)	1
Past (and unlikely to return) and no longer limiting,	0

Scope of selected threat	Scope score
Whole area/population (>90%)	3
Most of area/population (50-90%)	2
Some of area/few individuals (<10%)	1
Small area/few individuals (<10%)	0

Severity of selected threat	Severity Score
Rapid deterioration (>30% over 10 years or 3 generations Whichever is the longer)	3
Moderate deterioration (10-30% over 10 years or 3 generations)	2
Slow deterioration (1-10% over 10 years or 3 generations)	1
No or imperceptible deterioration (<1% over 10 years)	0

Notes on threat types

- Agricultural expansion & intensification.** Threats from farming and ranching as a result of agricultural expansion and intensification, including silviculture, mariculture and aquaculture. Note that wood and pulp plantations include afforestation, and livestock farming and ranching includes forest grazing. Agricultural pest control and agricultural pollution-specific problems apply to '5. Over-exploitation, persecution and control', and '9. Pollution' respectively.
- Residential and commercial development.** Threats from human settlements or other non-agricultural land uses with a substantial footprint; resulting in habitat destruction and degradation, also causing mortality through collision. Note that domestic or industrial pollution-specific problems apply to '9. Pollution'.
- Energy production & mining.** Threats from production of non-biological resources; resulting in habitat destruction and degradation, also causing mortality through collision. Note that renewable energy includes windfarms
- Transportation & service corridors** Threats from long narrow transport corridors and the vehicles that use them, including shipping lanes and flight paths; resulting in habitat destruction and degradation, erosion, disturbance and collision.
- Over-exploitation, persecution & control** Threats from consumptive use of wild biological resources including both deliberate and unintentional harvesting effects; also persecution or control of specific species. Note that hunting includes egg-collecting, gathering includes firewood collection, and logging includes clear cutting, selective logging and charcoal production.
- Human intrusions & disturbance** Threats from human activities that alter, destroy and disturb habitats and species associated with non-consumptive uses of biological resources.
- Natural system modifications** Threats from actions that convert or degrade habitat in service of managing natural or semi-natural systems, often to improve human welfare. Note that 'other ecosystem modifications' include intensification of forest management, abandonment of managed lands, reduction of land management, and under grazing. 'Dams & water management/use' includes construction and impact of dykes/dams/barrages, filling in of wetlands, groundwater abstraction, drainage, dredging and canalization.
- Invasive & other problematic species and genes** Threats from non-native and native plants, animals, pathogens and other microbes, or genetic materials that have or are predicted to have harmful effects on biodiversity (through mortality of species or alteration of habitats) following their introduction, spread and/or increase in abundance.
- Pollution** Threats from introduction of exotic and/or excess materials from point and non-point sources causing mortality of species and/or alteration of habitats. Note that domestic and urban waste water includes sewage and run-off; industrial and military effluents includes oils spills and seepage from mining; agricultural and forestry effluents and practices includes nutrient loads, soil erosion, sedimentation, high fertilizer input, excessive use of chemicals and salinization; and air-borne pollutants includes acid rain

10. **Geological events** Threats from catastrophic geological events that have the potential to cause severe damage to habitats and species.
11. **Climate change & severe weather** Threats from long-term climatic changes which may be linked to global warming and other severe climatic/weather events.

THREAT TYPE	Scores			DETAILS
	Timing	Scope	Severity	
1. Agricultural expansion & intensification				Give details of specific crops, e.g. oil palm, or animals e.g. cattle, & issue
Annual crops- Shifting agriculture				
- Small-holder farming				
- Agro-industry farming				
Perennial non-timber crops- Small-holder plantations				
-Agro-industry plantations				
Wood &pulp plantations- Small-holder plantations				
- Agro-industry plantations				
Livestock farming & ranching- Nomadic grazing				
- Small-holder grazing, ranching or farming				
- Agro-industry grazing, ranching or farming				
Marine & freshwater aquaculture				
-Subsistence/ artisanal aquaculture				
- Industrial aquaculture				
2. Residential & commercial development				Give details of type of development & issue
Housing & urban areas				
Commercial & industrial areas				
Tourism & recreation areas				
3. Energy production & mining				Give details of specific resource & issue
Oil & gas drilling				
Mining & quarrying				
Renewable energy				
4. Transportation & service corridors				
Roads & railroads				
Utility & service lines				
Shipping lanes				
Flight paths				
5. Over-exploitation, persecution & control of species				Give details of issue
Direct mortality of 'trigger' species-hunting & trapping				
- persecution/control				
Indirect mortality (bycatch) of 'trigger' species-hunting				
- fishing				
Habitat effects-hunting & trapping				
- gathering plants				
- logging				
- fishing & harvesting aquatic resources				

THREAT TYPE	Scores			DETAILS
	Timing	Scope	Severity	
6. Human intrusions & disturbance				Give details of specific activity & issue
Recreational activities				

War, civil unrest & military exercises				
Work & other activities				
7. Natural system modifications	Give details of the alteration & issue			
Fire & fire suppression				
Dams & water managements				
Other ecosystem modifications				
8. Invasive & other problematic species & genes	Give details of the invasive or problematic species & issue			
Invasive alien species				
Problematic native species				
Introduced genetic material				
9. Pollution	Give details of pollution, source if known (e.g. Agricultural, domestic, industrial) & issue			
Domestic & urban waste water				
Industrial & military effluents				
Agricultural & forestry effluents & practices				
Garbage & solid waste				
Air-borne pollutants				
Noise pollution				
Thermal pollution				
Light pollution				
10. Geological events	Give details of specific event and issue			
Volcanic eruptions				
Earthquakes/tsunamis				
Avalanches/landslides				
11. Climate change & severe weather	Give details of specific event & issue			
Habitat shifting & alteration				
Drought				
Temperature extremes				
Storms & floods				
12. Other	If the threat does not appear to fit in the scheme above, give details here of the threat, its source if known and how it's affecting the IBA			
1.				
2.				
3.				

CONDITION OF BIRD POPULATIONS AND HABITATS ('STATE')

General comments on condition of the site and any changes since your last assessment (if relevant):

If you have **estimates or counts of bird populations**, or other information on the important bird species at the IBA, please summarize these in the table below

Bird species or groups	Population estimate (state whether individuals or pairs)	Details/other comments

If you have information on the **area** of the natural habitats important for birds' populations at the IBA, please summarize it below. Please note any major changes since last assessment in the 'details' column.

Habitat	Current area if known (include units, e.g. ha, km²) or code	Details/comments/major changes

† Habitat area codes: Choose from Good (overall >90% of optimum), Moderate (70-90%) or Very Poor (<40%). If you do not know the actual habitat area, give your best assessment of the current habitat area at the site, in relation to its potential optimum if the site was undisturbed. The percentages are given as guidelines only: use your best estimate. Please justify your coding in the 'details' column.

If you have information on the **quality** of the natural habitats important for bird populations at the IBA, please summarize it below. Please note any major changes since last assessment in the 'details' column.

Habitat	Quality rating*	Details/comments/major changes

- Habitat quality rating: Choose from Good (overall >90% of optimum), Moderate (70-90%), Poor (40-70%) or Very Poor (<40%). Give your best assessment of the average habitat quality across the site, in terms of its suitability for the important bird species. The percentages relate to the population density of the 'trigger' species in its key habitat. Thus 100% means that the species is at carrying capacity in its habitat. The percentages are given as guidelines only: use your best estimate. Please justify your selection in the 'details' column.

• CONSERVATION ACTIONS TAKEN AT IBA ('RESPONSE')

General comments on actions taken at the site, including recent changes or developments

Please tick the box next to the text that applies for each of conservation designation, management planning and conservation action below. Please add any details and where appropriate give a brief explanation for your choice.

CONSERVATION DESIGNATION

- Whole area of IBA (>90%) covered by appropriate conservation designation
- Most of IBA (50-90%) covered (including the most critical parts for the important bird species)
- Some of IBA covered (10-49%)
- Little/none of IBA covered (<10%)

Details and explanation _____

MANAGEMENT PLANNING

- A comprehensive and appropriate management plan exists that aims to maintain or improve the population of qualifying

- A management plan exists but it is out of date or not comprehensive
- No management planning exists but the management planning process has begun
- No management planning has taken place

Details and explanation _____

CONSERVATION ACTION

- The conservation measures needed for the site are being comprehensively and effectively implemented
- Substantive conservation measures are being implemented but these are not comprehensive and are limited by resources and capacity
- Some limited conservation initiatives are in place (e.g. action by Local Conservation Groups)
- Very little or no conservation action is taking place

Details and explanation _____

PART III. INFORMATION ON PEOPLE AND INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR ACTIVITIES

Please record any details of Local Conservation Groups (LCGs) (e.g. SSGs, Caretaker Groups) established at the site in the table below.

LCG name	Total members	Male members	Female members	Other information

PART IV. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN AT THE IBA

In the table opposite, please indicate the activities undertaken by any the LCG, other CBO, the Birdlife Partner, Government agencies or other organizations or people at the IBA. This should include current activities, and activities carried out in the last four years

Notes on action type

- Land/water protection** Actions to identify, establish or expand parks and other legally protected areas
- Land/water management** Actions directed at conserving or restoring sites, habitats and the wider environment
- Species management** Actions directed at managing or restoring species, focused on the species of concern itself
- Education & awareness** Actions directed at people to improve understanding and skills, and influence behavior
- Law & policy** Actions to develop, change, influence, and help implement formal legislation, regulations (including at the community level), and voluntary standards.
- Livelihood, economic & other incentives** Actions to use economic and other incentives and to influence behavior
- External capacity building** Actions to build infrastructure resulting in better conservation, including through civil society development (e.g. enhancing community role in decision-making on natural resource use).

ACTION TYPE	Action being undertaken by					DETAILS
	LCG	Other CBO	Birdlife Partner	Government	Other (specify)	
1. Land/water protection						
Site/area protection						
Resource & habitat protection						
2. Land/water management						
General site/area management						
Invasive/problematic species control						
Habitat & natural process restoration						
3. Species management						
General species management						
Species recovery						
Species (re)introduction						

4. Education & awareness						
Formal education						
Training						
Awareness, publicity & communications						
5. Law & policy						
Public legislation						
Policies and regulations						
Private sector standards & codes						
Compliance, enforcement & policy						
6. Livelihood, economic & other incentives						
Linked enterprises & livelihood alternatives (e.g. ecotourism)						
Substitution (alternative products to reduce pressure)						
Market forces (e.g. certification)						
Conservation payments						
Non-monetary values (e.g. spiritual, cultural)						
7. Capacity building						
Institutional & civil society development						
Alliance and partnership development						
Conservation finance						
8. Other (e.g. surveys, monitoring, research, EIAs)						
1.						
2.						
3.						

PART V. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please give any further information or details that you think may be helpful. For example • Number of conservation staff and volunteers • Number of visitors • Revenue generated • Interesting bird records • Lists or details of other fauna or flora • Useful contacts (for research or conservation projects, tourism initiatives etc.) • Other notes. Please attach or send more sheets or other documents/reports as necessary.

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this form



Annex 3: List of contributors to the Status and Trends Report

BirdLife Zimbabwe	
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