

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND DISSEMINATION OF BIRD ACTIVITY BOOK IN MALAWI

FINAL REPORT TO AFRICAN BIRD CLUB UK

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ZOMBA BRANCH**

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OBJECTIVES and ACHIEVEMENTS

- 1) To fund a Wildlife Club Coordinator working in Phalombe District of Malawi in which is situated part of the RAMSA site associated with Lake Chilwa. The Coordinator Johnson Namauti has been funded and has performed excellently;
- 2) To train 70 Club leaders in the use of the Bird Activity Book (see separate Adobe pdf which anyone is welcome to download and use) so as to provide them with practical material with which to make their club activities better focussed on birds and as well as being more attractive to their members. 72 Club leaders were trained.
- 3) To involve 1,400 children in activities relating to birds. Club numbers fluctuate slightly but the average membership is well above 20 so that it can be confidently stated that this number of children have been involved. In order to encourage their interest a poster and essay competition was held earlier in the year and over 300 club members submitted entries. Trees for birds are becoming increasingly scarce and the clubs raised and planted out around 8,000 trees in the schools and surrounding villages during the year.

The main achievement has been to provide Club leaders with a tool to give their meetings less of a “classroom” flavour and move the members into outdoor activities.

Unfortunately Lake Chilwa has largely dried up this year (the first time since 1994) which has meant that the water birds have emigrated to other sites which has limited the club members’ opportunities for identifying water birds. Hopefully the lake will re-fill with the coming rains and the children will be able to use their new knowledge of birds in relation to those of the waterside as well as the open areas around their villages

IMPLEMENTATION AND COSTS

The Branch was fortunate that the salary and expenses of the coordinator were covered by the Danish donor for longer than had been anticipated because unexpected rises in costs have meant that the African Bird Club funds only covered nine months of activity. The first problem was the absence of fuel in Malawi for the first six months of 2012. In consequence the coordinator had (like the rest of us) to buy fuel smuggled from Mozambique and sold on the “alternative market” at £3.20 a litre. In addition it was found that his activity level was increased with the work associated with the Bird Book and so his fuel allocation had to be raised to 18 litres per month. The second unexpected cost resulted from the introduction of a new compulsory pension scheme which involved WESM making a contribution of 10% of Johnson’s salary to the fund each month.



Johnson and his motor cycle holding up pictures drawn for the competition

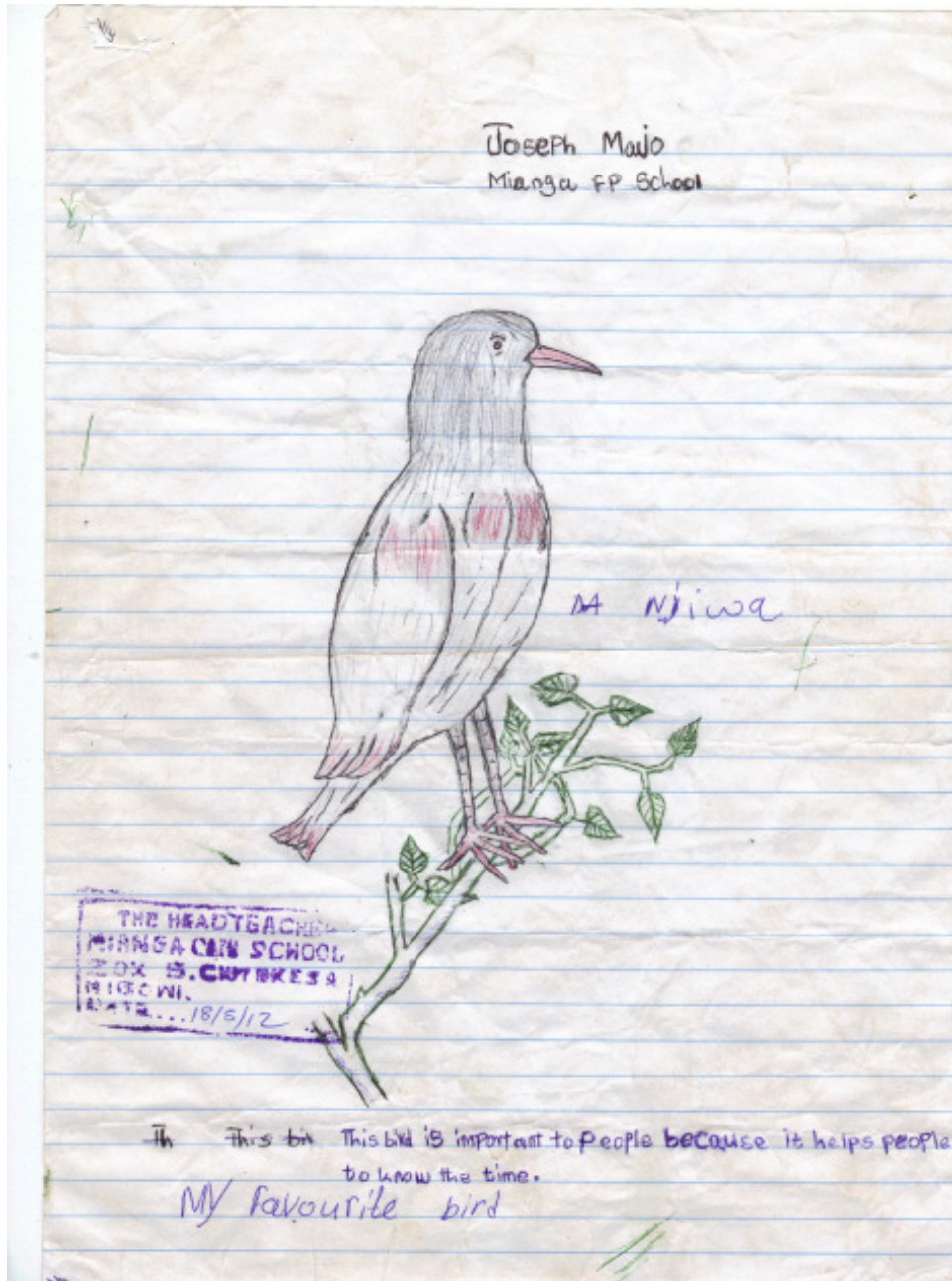


Children weeding the nursery which they have developed themselves of trees to be planted around the school and village to provide more trees for birds.



Group photo of a typical club in a girls school.

In early 2012 we arranged a picture competition for the children in the Phalombe District Wildlife Clubs. 80 children participated and the winning entries are included below. These are 12 or 13 year olds who are in a class of 60 or 70 children and who normally can only draw in the dust as they have neither paper nor pencils at home. At school they will occasionally be allowed to draw in an exercise book but they get minimal practice. The pictures therefore need to be seen in this light. They had to draw their favourite bird and say why they liked it.



This is a mourning dove "which tells us the time". This refers to its habit of roosting near houses and calling early in the morning.



This a turaco which the child likes because it "has beautiful colours, a nice call and it flaps its wings slowly when it flies".



This (which won first prize) is a crane and it is liked because "of the way it stretches out its neck and flies very beautifully".

The individual children received back packs containing varying numbers of exercise books, pens and mathematics sets according to their position which gave great pleasure while the club to which the winning children belonged received a football, once again very highly prized.

We are assured that after seeing the prizes far more children will participate if we hold another competition! The cost of the prizes was not drawn from your funds but was only made possible by having a coordinator in the district..

This has undoubtedly created fresh interest in the clubs which are certainly benefiting from having a really enthusiastic coordinator to help their leaders.

CONCLUSION

The WESM Zomba Branch greatly appreciates the financial support given by the African Bird Club UK which has enabled it to spread the use of the Bird Book which it produced and to provide encouragement and training to the leaders of its clubs in Phalombe district

BUDGET AND ACTUAL COSTS (£)

Item	Budget	Actual
Salary 9 months	1,248 (12 months)	936
Pension payment	-	93.60
Fuel (1)	188	410.40
Repairs	40	23
Insurance	12	12
Licence(2)	8	20

(1) 18 litres @ £3.20 for six months

18 litres @ £1.20 for three months

(2) In order to raise money the government forced all vehicle owners to buy new number plates at £12 in the case of motor cycles as a form of additional tax..