

The Perceptions of Local Communities towards the Conservation of Birds in an Important Bird Area in Ghana

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Abstract

The important bird areas (IBA) concept provides a practical index of the diversity and condition of an ecosystem on a site-by-site basis using birds as indicators. It is believed that protecting and managing such sites will result in the conservation of some of the most sensitive, fragile and ecologically rich habitats in the world. However, acceptance of the IBA concept and, thus, site conservation action, by local communities is dependent on their perception of the importance of birds with regard to some aspects of their livelihood. The study was undertaken to examine the importance local communities around an IBA, the Afadjato and Agumatsa Conservation Area in Ghana, attach to conservation of birds, and their relevance as an indicator of environmental quality. Results obtained from a questionnaire survey, combined with group interviews, suggest that the importance local communities attached to bird conservation in the area was, to a large extent, dependent on the village or locality where people lived.