Enhancing the conservation and wise use of Lake Natron Ramsar site in Tanzania as a model for safeguarding threatened key biodiversity areas in Africa while improving community livelihoods

FINAL PROJECT REPORT TO:

AAGE V. JENSEN CHARITY FOUNDATION

January 2010 to December 2012.

BirdLife INTERNATIONAL
Together for birds and people

Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania
Nature Kenya
The East Africa Natural History Society
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Part 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

BirdLife International’s work involves the protection of sites of global significance for biodiversity conservation termed as Important Bird Areas (IBAs). In Africa, over 1,200 sites are vital to both flora and fauna and are also a source of livelihoods for the communities living around them.

The project has been working in Lake Natron in Northern Tanzania. Since 2006, the shallow saline lake drew global attention as a result of a soda ash mining proposal initially put forward by Tata Chemicals Industries and the Government of Tanzania. They planned to build a soda ash plant at the site but the former withdrew their intention in 2008, following intense opposition from BirdLife International, its partners and Lake Natron Consultative Group. But the Tanzania Government maintained a keen interest.

Lake Natron is the most important breeding site of Lesser Flamingos in the world. The 1.5-2.5 million birds found in East Africa (75% of the world’s population) are hatched there. The proposal drew strong reactions from all quarters including BirdLife International, its partners and Lake Natron Consultative Group.

Following Birdlife International’s successful ‘think pink’ campaign in fending off the original threat, there was a need to do something tangible on the ground. The A.V. Jensen Charity Foundation provided a grant of €300,000 to BirdLife in 2010 to implement a project at Lake Natron building on the success of the campaign to ensure the long term protection of Lake Natron and in turn, protect the near threatened lesser flamingos.

Over time, the Tanzanian Government sent mixed signals regarding its intention on Lake Natron. For example, in March 2011, the President ordered the Ministry of Industry and Trade to fast track plans for the construction of the soda ash plant at Lake Natron. However, in October 2011, the Director of Environment said government intention was to preserve the ecological integrity of the lake by banning damaging human activities. In March 2012, the Government announced that it was working with Tata to explore newly discovered soda ash deposits at Engaruka near Lake Natron, but Tata denied any involvement.

The implementation of the A.V Jensen funded project drew immense goodwill of the local communities. At the same time a recent Cost Benefit Analysis report demonstrated that the soda ash investment was not economically viable.

Project goal:

To protect Lake Natron, the only breeding site for the near-threatened lesser flamingo in East Africa, and use the experience gained in campaigning against damaging development at Lake Natron to safeguard other threatened high biodiversity sites in Africa. The project goals were:

- To enhance the protection of Lake Natron
- To strengthen and maintain a constituency for conservation of Lake Natron
- To use the Lake Natron experience to disseminate lessons learnt

Project Partners:

SUMMARY OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACTS

Key project achievements are:

- Tata Group definitively pulls out of soda ash mining at Lake Natron.
- 5,000 ha of Mutulanganga IBA in Zambia saved from logging concession granted to a Chinese company.
- Copper mining in the Lower Zambezi IBA in Zambia halted as a result of a campaign funded by this project.
- 10,000 ha of key forest in Kenya, Dakatcha Woodlands, saved from major biofuels investment.
- Wildlife Management Area (WMA) established on the Longido side of Lake Natron.
- 3 Site Support Groups comprising of 150 members of the local community at Ngare Sero, Pinyinyi and Magadini villages were formed. This is in addition to the building of the capacity of 110 women at Ngare Sero Village to run the cultural boma.
- 2 Water Users Associations formed in Pinyinyi and Olondosambu villages bordering Lake Natron resulting in higher water use efficiency for the benefit of people and biodiversity.
- 30 participants trained in IBA monitoring; capacity building for 110 women in construction, organisation and management of the cultural boma completed; 30 local tour guides trained.
- The Ngare Sero cultural boma completed comprising of 21 Maasai huts and water intake at Pinyinyi Village.
- A Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) report finalised and shared at a stakeholder meeting, demonstrating tourism, local livelihoods improvement and conservation are economically more beneficial than soda ash mining.
- Key dissemination materials produced: The Lake Natron Case Study (80 page book telling the Lake Natron campaign story) and a site casework guidance booklet, both aimed at supporting Birdlife Partners to undertake campaigns for sites under threat; Tanzania’s Lesser Flamingo Species Action Plan finalised and disseminated; Marketing brochure produced titled, ‘Experience Undiluted Nature and Culture’ outlining the beauty and uniqueness of Lake Natron, its biodiversity and cultural importance.
- Information disseminated through the BirdLife Community webpage (14 stories on Lake Natron), Update Bulletin (18 editions shared); BirdLife Africa Newsletter, (5 articles) with most recent as Dec 2012 cover story focused on the Cost and Benefit analysis report.
- Tanzanian television station (ITV) ran story on project efforts to provide water at Magadini Village.
- Audit of IBAs in Danger in Africa carried out by the African Sites Casework on Emerging Threats Taskforce (ASCET); tentative list of 60 such IBAs identified.
- Office of the Prime Minister in Kenya inaugurated a Deltas Coordination Unit ensuring coordinated development and management of Kenya’s deltas in light of increasing development pressure in these sensitive sites.
- Process of developing Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and land use plan initiated for Tana Delta and coordinated by the Office of the Prime Minister with technical support from Nature Kenya.
- In 2012, the Tana delta was listed as a Ramsar site.
- Campaign carried out by WCST in August 2011 among local communities surrounding Serengeti seeking support against proposed construction of a road through Serengeti.

Key project impacts are:

- Improved livelihoods at local community level through enhanced capacity for income generation projects.
- Local constituency has been built up in support of conserving and protecting Lake Natron and Lesser Flamingos.
- As a result of policy engagement and information dissemination, Tata confirmed and announced permanent withdrawal from the proposed soda ash investment.
- Conservation status of Lake Natron enhanced through the formation of a Wildlife Management Area on the Longido side.
- Key biodiversity sites saved from major development investments through advocacy – examples include Mutulanganga, Tana Delta, Dakatcha woodlands and Lower Zambezi IBA.
- Increased awareness achieved through various means of communications e.g BirdLife community webpage, E-bulletin and Lake Natron update bulletin.
- Lessons from Lake Natron campaign disseminated widely through Lake Natron Case Study and key meetings.
- The capacity to coordinate site casework in Africa boosted through the formation of the African Sites Casework Emerging Threats Taskforce.
PART 2: ANNUAL PROJECT REPORT

Project progress during the reporting period September 12 to December 12
(period of no cost extension)

Establish a revolving community micro-project fund to promote wetlands friendly
behaviour and ensure that an increasing proportion of local community members
draw tangible economic benefits from the biodiversity and other ecosystem services
of the Lake Natron ecosystem.

Six signposts were designed and placed at 6 strategic locations at Lake Natron. The
signposts with the logos of key institutions (A.V Jensen Charity Foundation, WCST, BirdLife,
Wetlands Unit) were installed at Mto wa Mbu, Ngare Sero, Pinyinyi, Magadini and Moinik
junction. These metallic/wooden signposts are helping to publicize the work done by the
project and will serve as a landmark that will out-survive the project

At Magadini village construction of a pipeline to provide water to Magadini village is very
near completion. Since the last progress report 13km (as opposed to original 12km) of
pipeline has been laid and an intake constructed. The terrain is steep and huge valleys exist
making the task extremely difficult but the communities and WCST worked together to make
the reality of fresh water at Magadini possible giving hope to 2,000 residents of the village at
the base of Gelai hill next to Lake Natron.

At the time of writing this report, the final task of connecting all the pipes together is still
outstanding but will be completed within the next 3 to 4 weeks. Funds for this final work have
already been expended; hence appear in the final budget report. A final update together
with photos of the finished pipeline will be sent to The A.V. Jensen Charity Foundation once
this action has been finalised.

PART 3: PROJECT COMPLETION OVERVIEW

Objective 1: Enhanced protection of Lake Natron

Provide the Wildlife Division of the government of Tanzania, two District Councils
around Lake Natron and the local community with technical support and studies to
both develop and implement an Integrated Management Plan for Lake Natron Ramsar
Site.

Two Water User Associations formed

Two Water Users Associations, now transformed into cooperatives in line with the 2003
Cooperative Act, were formed in the villages of Pinyinyi and Oldonyosambu bordering Lake
Natron. This has been critical in ensuring water is utilised sustainably for the benefit of
people as well as conservation of the lake and the flamingos. The two villages are located
close to the breeding sites for the Lesser Flamingos and prudent use of water is ensuring
that fresh water is available for the flamingos and the chicks during breeding. In the past,
most of the water was trapped upstream for irrigation with little finding its way downstream.
**Impact:** More water is now flowing into Lake Natron which is a major conservation benefit for biodiversity, especially the flamingos. Water is now used efficiently to support agricultural activities for better livelihoods and there is greater cooperation and cohesion and less conflict among the community, together with greater inter-agency cooperation with both government and civil society.

![Benefits of conserving water resources: A maize crop at Pinyinyi Village (Photo: Ken Mwathe)](image)

**WCST participates in Wildlife Management Area processes in Longido**

WCST participated in processes to establish a Wildlife Management Area (WMA) on the Longido side of Lake Natron - organised by the African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) and the Wildlife Division in August, September and October 2011.

Initially the plan was to establish a WMA on the Ngorongoro side of Lake Natron as well as the Longido side and provide input into the Integrated Management Plan (IMP). Unfortunately these activities proved to be highly bureaucratic and unachievable during the project period for the Ngorongoro side hence recommendations were made to A.V.J.C.F not to pursue this. Nevertheless WCST continued to provide input and support to the WMA process on the Longido side, during which villages were sensitised and introduced to the process. An inventory and land use planning at village level and mapping and demarcation of the would-be WMA area has been carried out. In addition, studies on tourism, hunting and benefit-sharing, as well as a socio-economic survey have been initiated.

**Impact:** While the WMA process is not yet fully complete, local communities are already actively participating in the management of their own resources. It is expected that they will gain greater benefit from these resources in the long term. A clear management plan for the area specifying permitted activities within designated areas will help to discourage damaging developments such as soda ash mining.
Listing of Lake Natron Kenya as Ramsar Site – Nature Kenya

During the course of the project Nature Kenya held meetings with Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and agreed on the Ramsar listing process for Lake Natron. An agreement on the way forward for Ramsar listing was reached, to include stakeholder meetings, baseline surveys and completing the Ramsar Information Sheet. However, little progress was made in this regard due to the fact that Nature Kenya and KWS were also involved in a similar process for the Tana Delta and it was logistically impossible to do both.

Subsequently, by the time of submitting this report, Tana Delta has been successfully listed as a Ramsar Site1, but Lake Natron has still to complete the process.

Work with local stakeholders to gazette the site as an appropriate Protected Area under national and international legislation.

World Heritage Convention listing proposed

The Government of Tanzania indicated a willingness to consider a proposal for the listing of Lake Natron on the World Heritage Site list. This is included in Tanzania’s Lesser Flamingo Action Plan printed in August 2012. Under objective 1: “Ensure that all key breeding and feeding sites are maintained in good ecological condition” the plan envisages key Flamingo sites being designated as World Heritage Sites, Important Bird Areas, Ramsar Sites and other related forms of designation. Lake Natron is already an IBA and Ramsar Site but missed the opportunity to join other Rift Valley lakes in a serial nomination, which was completed in 2011, bringing together three Kenyan Lakes: Bogoria, Nakuru, and Elementaita. However, thanks to the recommendation in the species action plan of including designated flamingo sites as World Heritage Sites, the Government of Tanzania and relevant stakeholders are now in a position to start the formal process.

Impact: The expected future impact of the WHS listing will be greater recognition on the global platform of the World Heritage Convention that would demand greater attention and planning on the part of the Tanzanian government.

Ramsar Site office established

A Ramsar Site office was established at Lake Natron. A Ramsar Site Manager and a Site Conservation Officer are based at the office and have been working closely with local communities at the site to oversee effective management and wise use of the Lake’s resources.

The presence of the two officers is fostering a greater awareness on the part of the local communities of the need to conserve and use its resources sustainably. As a result there is greater resolve by the local communities to oppose the construction of a soda ash plant, evidenced by a new study showing that 80 per cent of the local communities are opposed to soda ash mining.

Impact: Having an office with site officers on the ground is facilitating greater coordination of conservation and protection activities at site level.

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1 Tana Delta now a Ramsar Site: http://www.ramsar.org/cda/en/ramsar-news-archives-2012-kenya-tana/main/ramsar/1-26-45-520%5E25948_4000_0
Support meetings and training to facilitate dialogue and engagement of the local community, local and central government and national civil society stakeholders.

The project facilitated a number of important meetings and forums were held to encourage dialogue on a wide range of issues. These meetings were held at local and national level in Tanzania and Kenya.

- A workshop was held at Mto wa Mbu, near Lake Manyara National Park on 1-3\textsuperscript{rd} February 2010 to discuss and finalise the Single Species Action Plan (SSAP) for Tanzania’s Lesser Flamingos. The meeting organised by the Wetlands Unit was attended by over 40 participants drawn from the local community, NGOs, Government agencies at local and national level, Universities, research institutions. Through this Project, three Staff from the BirdLife Secretariat, several from WCST and one from Nature Kenya were supported to attend the workshop. The main Workshop Moderator was a staff of the BirdLife Partnership Secretariat.

- The Lake Natron Consultative Group held two strategy meetings to plan how to lead the Lake Natron campaign in 2010 and 2011. These meetings were meant to discuss progress in relation to the Lake Natron campaign and brought together the group’s institutional members based in Nairobi, among them: WCST, Nature Kenya, IPI, South Rift Land Owners Association and BirdLife Secretariat and Youth for Conservation. The meetings acknowledged the fact that in spite of Tata’s withdrawal of interest in the soda ash project but noted the need to maintain vigilance. The meeting also noted new initiatives at Lake Natron by BirdLife International through funding from A.V Jensen Foundation.

- A stakeholder meeting was convened by WCST on 18\textsuperscript{th} June 2011 to introduce the project and discuss ways of cooperating in implementing the project. 36 civil society, local community and government agencies convened at Lake Manyara National Park to discuss how to enhance the protection of the lake, cultivate goodwill and synergy. A key outcome of the meeting was bringing on board the Tanzania Tourism Board in moving forward ecotourism and cultural tourism activities.

- On 28\textsuperscript{th} August 2012 WCST convened a Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) meeting in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The meeting, attended by 35 participants from government, NGOs and local community, was called to seek views and input from the public on the CBA report. The majority of the participants welcomed the report and said tourism should be promoted rather than the soda ash factory at Lake Natron.

Raise awareness amongst local user groups, high level decision makers and other stakeholders for informed, wise use and integrated management planning.

_Tata denies new involvement with Tanzania Government_

One of the biggest successes of this project has been the Tata Group’s definitive pulling out of soda ash mining at Lake Natron. Following conflicting information from the Government of Tanzania regarding the involvement of the Tata Group in soda ash mining at Lake Natron, the Project carried out a full enquiry on the matter. The result was a letter from the Managing Director of Tata Chemicals Industries stating categorically that Tata Chemicals formally
exited the Lake Natron Development on 29th January 2009 and had not been involved with Lake Natron since that time. The full letter can be found in Annex 1.

This has clearly put to rest any speculation that Tata might consider reviving its interests regarding Lake Natron. We can only salute the Tata Group for this bold move and urge the Tanzania Government to follow suit by withdrawing the soda ash proposal altogether.

Full details of this case can be found in Environmental Advocacy at Work: Lessons Learnt from the Campaign to Save Lake Natron from Plans to Build a Soda Ash Factory - See full report on this link:

http://www.africa-climate-exchange.org/display/Search?moduleId=5139218&searchQuery=lake+natron+case+study

Institute cost-effective biodiversity monitoring to serve as an “Early Warning System” that will deliver information on trends in bird populations, habitat changes and management effectiveness.

IBA monitoring training was held in Arusha, Tanzania on the 19th of February 2012 with 30 people taking part. Key individuals were identified to assist with IBA monitoring in their particular locations. Local people shared their experiences, opportunities and challenges arising in their own ecosystems and are now assisting with the biodiversity monitoring work.

**Impact:** This monitoring training has started to build a critical mass of skilled people to conduct site monitoring at least once a year.

**Provide accurate and up to date information for informed decision making**

One of the key contributions of this project to policy dialogue has been a Cost Benefit Analysis study report comparing the benefits of mining soda ash at Lake Natron with that of sustainably using the resources to support livelihoods. The study showed that soda ash mining would be a loss-making business over a period of 50 years. Over that period, livelihoods and ecotourism would provide a return on investment of between $1.28 and $1.57 billion. Over the same period, return on investment from soda ash mining would be a loss of between $44,354,728 and $ 492,142,797. Moreover, evidence from the report, conducted by Dr Reuben Kadigi of Sokoine University of Agriculture in Morogoro, Tanzania showed that 80 per cent of local community members do not support the mining proposal.

A stakeholder meeting to disseminate the CBA report was held in Dar es Salaam in August 2012 where it received immense support. The meeting also attracted a lot of press coverage locally and internationally including in Thomson Reuters’ Sustainability website and the prestigious Mongabay.com titled: “Tanzania weighs new soda ash plant in prime flamingo territory”

**Impact:** The CBA report and the subsequent media coverage have given local communities and stakeholders yet another reason to reject the soda ash plan; they expressed this by

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supporting the report on 28th August. Also, the results of the study will hopefully discourage potential investors from investing in soda ash mining.

**Objective 2: Strengthen and maintain conservation constituency at Lake Natron**

Develop trans-boundary and basin-wide community networks at key nodes in the basin, building their capacity to sustainably use the basin's ecosystem services and to continue spreading the knowledge outwards.

Develop the organisational capacity of selected local community groups in the above networks and training them to establish and manage sustainable community nature-based enterprises in the Lake Natron ecosystem.

We implemented the above two sub-objectives as one. Here are the main highlights over the reporting period:

- 3 Site Support Groups (SSGs) comprising of 150 members at Ngare Sero Pinyinyi and Magadini villages were formed.
- On 1st, 2nd and 3rd December, 2011 five leaders of Ngare Sero Village visited the Seneto Maasai Cultural Group within Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCAA). The leaders were the Chair and Secretary of Ngare Sero Cultural Boma Women Group, the Nominated Councillor, the Village Executive Officer and the Chair of the Village Youth Tour Guides. The purpose of the visit was to exchange ideas and learn from Seneto Maasai cultural Boma, which is one of the most experienced groups in running tourism businesses. The interaction involved learning the history of the Boma, membership, ownership, handling of visitors, service delivery, distribution of earnings and benefits, challenges and success stories, constitution making and organisation. The visitors also took part in various activities to give them hands on experience on how to run a cultural boma.

The Ngare Sero Cultural boma overlooking ‘The Mountain of God’ (Photo: Ken Mwathe)

- Capacity building for 110 Maasai women took place, covering the construction, organisation and management of cultural boma.
- WCST in collaboration with the Tanzania Tourist Board trained 30 local guides on guiding skills and how to organise fee-paying tours to Lake Natron and up the mountain.
of God (Ol Donyo Lengai). Previously the guides were disorganised and did not have a standard tariff. Thanks to training, the guides are now able to charge standard rates and offer quality services. The qualified guides were awarded certificates by the Tanzania Tourist Board.

- An Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA) report was produced for one of the Community Based Organisations operating at Lake Natron (Ilkisongo Pastoralist Initiatives). The report revealed that existing groups are still nascent and have low institutional capacity to effectively champion conservation and protection of the ecosystem. It recommended that BirdLife and WCST invest in capacity building in order to establish a strong local SSG at Lake Natron. These recommendations were implemented.

**Impact:** There is now local capacity to support conservation and protect Lake Natron and women and youth have a platform from which to engage in development and conservation.

Establish a revolving community micro-project fund to promote wetlands friendly behaviour and ensure that an increasing proportion of local community members draw tangible economic benefits from the biodiversity and other ecosystem services of the Lake Natron ecosystem.

The project made considerable progress in providing opportunities for livelihoods in the target villages. Three villages near Lake Natron were identified for various livelihood projects. At Ngaresero, a Community Cultural Boma (centre) operated by 110 Maasai women with representation from men and young tour guides was completed in May 2012. It comprises of 21 traditional Maasai huts, an artefacts display area and a traditional cattle pen in the middle. Tourists visiting the boma will have the opportunity to spend nights in one of the huts, enjoy Maasai cuisine, dance with Maasai warriors (morans), herd cattle in the plains overlooking the Mountain of God (Ol Donyo Lengai) and buy hand-made beadwork made by Maasai women.
At Pinyinyi Village the project completed the rehabilitation of the intake that provides water to irrigation farms tapped from the Pinyinyi River. Pinyinyi village used to construct a new intake every year since previously they would be washed away by flash floods. This project embarked on providing a strong, reliable intake which can stand the strongest possible flooding. That was accomplished in April 2012 when a new intake made of concrete, cement and wire mesh was completed and presented to the local leaders. For the first time, Pinyinyi village has a reliable water intake.

At Magadini village which is 40km away from Ngare Sero village, construction of a pipeline to provide water to Magadini village is very near completion (see Part 2 above). The village had no fresh water and school children had to fetch salty water to prepare their breakfast before going to class. Survey work was completed; materials sourced and by the time of submitting this report, 13km of pipeline had been laid giving hope to 2,000 residents of the village at the base of Gelai hill next to Lake Natron. These efforts were recognised by local media and featured on ITV, a local TV station in March 2012.

A marketing brochure was developed to market the cultural boma and other attractions at Lake Natron. The beautiful brochure with the slogan ‘Experience Undiluted Nature and Culture’ outlines the beauty and uniqueness of Lake Natron, its flamingos, surrounding areas such as the Ol Donyo Lengai (Mountain of God) and the Maasai community that depend on the lake and its ecosystem. It also invites tourists to visit the cultural boma that was set up with the help of this project.

Six signposts have been designed and placed at 6 strategic locations at Lake Natron. The signposts with the logos of key institutions (A/V Jensen Charity Foundation, WCST, BirdLife, Wetlands Unit) were installed at Mto wa Mbu, Ngare Sero, Pinyinyi, Magadini and Moinik junction. Having been installed, these signposts are helping to publicize the work done by the project.

It was not possible to establish a revolving fund per se during the period because more effort went towards establishing the livelihoods initiatives. It was necessary for these livelihoods and capacity to be in place before a revolving fund could be established. However, draft guidelines on how to run revolving funds were developed during the project period and will be available in follow up projects.

**Impact:** Local communities in all three villages are taking part in initiatives that have the potential to improve their lives well into the future. There is now a strong local grassroots buy-in to the project assuring the future protection of Lake Natron and its natural resources. More efficient water use is benefiting biodiversity, especially the lesser flamingo.

Contribute to a process of building a national cadre of research self-sufficiency and evidence-based conservation at Lake Natron e.g. supporting research into the chemistry and hydrology of the lake.

It was not possible to train a PhD student in chemistry and hydrology of the lake. This was largely due to difficulties in finding Tanzanian students interested in the subject and
semester timings at various universities. With authorisation from the A.V Jensen Charity Foundation these funds were reallocated to support livelihoods initiatives.

Objective 3: Using the Lake Natron experience to disseminate lessons learnt

Analyse and document experiences from the ongoing campaign for Lake Natron, and recent campaigns for other sites in Africa, drawing on lessons learned and making available as a set of case studies to a wide range of conservation practitioners.

Lake Natron wins WWN Global Award

The World Wetlands Network awarded efforts to conserve Lake Natron by awarding the WWN Blue Globe Award. Conferred in October 2010, the award cited recent efforts to improve the management by, among other things, the posting of a Ramsar Site Manager by the Government of Tanzania, putting in place a process of development of an Integrated Management Plan as well as the establishment of a Wildlife Management Area. BirdLife participated at the ceremony asking the Government of Tanzania to honour the award through a commitment to conservation of the Lake. The award was received by Engineer Baya on behalf of the Tanzanian Government. See links: http://www.birdlife.org/community/2010/11/lake-natron-scoops-top-award/ and http://www.africa-climate-exchange.org

Case studies and sharing of experiences

Two documents were produced to share information and lessons learnt from the Lake Natron advocacy work. These are the Lake Natron case study and a Lessons Learnt booklet: The Lake Natron case Study: Through the project, experiences and lessons from the campaign were documented in a volume titled: “Environmental advocacy at work: Lessons learnt from the campaign to save Lake Natron from plans to construct a Soda ash factory.”.

Site casework guidance booklet: The project contributed to the production of a 16-page guidance booklet on how to conduct site casework, i.e. action to protect sites in danger from damaging development. The booklet draws on lessons, tools, and strategies from campaigns that have taken place across Africa and refers to experiences from Europe. The booklet is a distillation of best practices in site casework.

Information dissemination

Throughout the project we maintained a conscious effort to share and disseminate information through various channels – including the following:
• The “Think Pink” page: This website shares news and information on a global campaign to save Lesser Flamingos’ most important breeding site: http://www.birdlife.org/action/campaigns/lake_natron_flamingos/index.html

• The BirdLife Africa Newsletter was another source of information. Five newsletter articles have been published on Lake Natron, the most recent in the December 2012 edition which was a cover story titled “Lake Natron: Ecotourism and livelihoods improvement better option than soda ash mining” focusing on the Cost and Benefit Analysis report. Other issues highlighted the Single Species Action Plan (SSAP) process for Tanzania, the World Wetlands Network Blue Globe Award and the impacts of the livelihoods projects to the communities in Lake Natron.

• The BirdLife Community: This is an interactive web page which reaches many within BirdLife and without. 14 stories were shared during the project period among them: “Fresh concerns as President orders Lake Natron soda ash mining fast tracked”, “What does the Serengeti Highway decision mean for Lake Natron?” and “Stakeholders happy with new Lake Natron cost benefit analysis report”.

• The Lake Natron Consultative Group Update Bulletin continued to be sent to thousands of people across the globe who are on the Group’s mailing list. This is in addition to 56 institutions, who are members of the group. The Update Bulletin became a key means of communication for the campaign and a source of news on Lake Natron since the Lake Natron soda ash proposal came to light. Since the beginning of this project in 2010 a total of 18 bulletins have been shared.

• As previously mentioned a local Tanzanian television station (ITV) ran a story on efforts by this project to provide water at Magadini Village.

• The June 2011 issue of World Bird Watch magazine, featured a story about Lake Natron over concerns on the fast tracking of soda ash mining by the Tanzanian president

• Miombo, the WCST newsletter published two articles on Lake Natron. The December 2011 issue featured an article on ‘Conservation and wise use of Lake Natron Ramsar site in Tanzania' highlighting project activities such as raising awareness, training communities and the establishment of livelihood initiatives. The September 2011 issue explored the link between Lake Natron and the proposed road across Serengeti National Park.

Impacts: Lesson sharing and information sharing have played an important role in saving other sites from damaging development. Information on how to conduct successful campaigns is now widely available providing a valuable resource for future groups and projects.

Involve representatives of community, local and central government (Tanzania and Kenya), NGOs, global financing agencies, donor countries, businessmen and BirdLife, to evaluate progress in the Lesser Flamingo Species Action Plan.

Lesser Flamingo Action Plan produced

Tanzania’s Lesser Flamingo Single Species Action Plan was published. The Project provided facilitation for various consultation meetings as well as printing of the final
document. The ten-year Action Plan that was rolled out in August 2012 will guide the conservation of Lesser Flamingos in Tanzania and focuses on actions for 2010-2020. The Action Plan identifies actions required to protect key sites for the survival of the Lesser Flamingo. The A.V Jensen Charity Foundation is appropriately acknowledged in the document.

**Impact:** The publication of the Lesser Flamingo Action Plan provides a clear framework for addressing the many threats that this species faces including disturbance to major breeding sites like Lake Natron. It will act as a guide on what projects can be done or are excluded in the area enabling a more participatory and effective approach to managing key flamingo habitat into the future.

**Use the tools above, scale up advocacy at national (ministries in charge of planning, economic development and environment) and regional decision making bodies**

The Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) meeting mentioned above was extensively and prominently disseminated at a stakeholders meeting held in Dar es Salaam on 28th August 2012. The meeting was opened by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources who commended WCST and BirdLife for commissioning the study and for filling a crucial information gap. He emphasized the importance of not further damaging the precious ecosystem famously saying: “If we lose Lake Natron, we may never truly know what we will have lost”

**Impact:** It is clear that the government hierarchy noticed and recognised the message from the CBA report and is likely to take into consideration the results of the study in any decisions regarding Lake Natron.

**Support additional multi-level (national, regional, global) conservation campaigns at selected priority biodiversity sites in Africa that are highly threatened by damaging development**

*ASCET Formed*

The African Sites Casework on Emerging Threats Taskforce (ASCET) was formed to provide leadership campaigns for sites under threat. ASCET is a sub-committee of the Africa Policy and Advocacy Working Group (APAWG). Members of the committee are staff of the BirdLife Africa Secretariat, the RSPB, Chair and Vice Chair of APAWG, BirdLife Global Secretariat and Partners where site casework campaigns are taking place.

ASCET was formed in 2010 and held its first meeting in July of that year with a set of Terms of Reference in place. By December 2012 ASCET had convened 8 meetings. Highlights of ASCET’s work to date include:

- An audit of *IBAs in Danger* in Africa carried out and report submitted to APAWG. The recommendations were endorsed at the last Council for Africa Partnership meeting in Nairobi in March 2012.
- A tentative list of 60 IBAs was produced. Currently this audit has proved useful in a current global effort to come up with a list of “IBAs in Danger”.
- Initiated the development of an Africa Site Casework web page. The web page contains resources to help BirdLife Partners to undertake campaigns and contains case studies from across Africa.

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5 APAWG is a committee of the Council for the Africa Partnership which is mandated to guide implementation of policy and advocacy programmes within the partnership. ASCET was formed under APAWG to provide leadership in site casework.
Support to additional Site Casework

This project helped support and provide motivation and learning for other campaigns happening elsewhere in Africa. The following are the highlights:

- Helped save the Lower Zambezi IBA in Zambia from a potentially damaging copper mining project. An Australian affiliated company, Mwembesi Resources Ltd, proposed to mine 8 million tonnes of copper ore per year but this was stopped through advocacy led by Bird Watch Zambia (BWZ, formerly Zambian Ornithological Society - ZOS).

- Halted plans to damage 5,000 hectares of Mutulanganga IBA (Zambia). A Chinese company had applied to log part of the forest of precious Mopane wood. This project supported the Zambian Ornithological Society (now Birdwatch Zambia) to lead advocacy work. Through presentations to the Environment Council of Zambia (ECZ), the plan was halted after a full Environmental Impact Assessment report was submitted.

Key sites saved in campaigns for Tana Delta and Dakatcha in Kenya

Nature Kenya continued strong advocacy against various developments in Tana Delta and Dakatcha Woodlands. Tana Delta and Dakatcha were facing numerous challenges, chief among them were biofuel investments that threatened biodiversity and people’s livelihoods. The following are the key outcomes:

- In November 2011 the National Environment Management Authority declined to approve\(^6\) Kenya Jatropha Energy Limited’s application to clear 10,000 ha of Bungale area of Dakatcha woodland in Malindi in the coastal province. The company had applied to clear part of the forest to plant *Jatropha curcus* whose seeds produce oil that can be burned instead of diesel. The company was forced to abandon its premises and investments after the denial of the permit.

- The Office of the Prime Minister inaugurated a Deltas Coordination Unit which will benefit not only Tana but also other delta systems in Kenya. The Coordination Unit will ensure coordinated development and management of the deltas in the country in light of increasing development pressure in these sensitive sites.

- The process of developing a Strategic Environmental Assessment and land use plan were initiated for Tana Delta, coordinated by the Prime Minister’s office with technical support from Nature Kenya.

- In September 2011, a high level meeting to discuss how to move the Strategic Plan for Tana Delta forward. The meeting brought together 65 representatives from key Kenyan government ministries and agencies, community representatives, NGOs, media and international experts.

- Nature Kenya (together with other Kenyan NGOs) continued to follow up the court case to block the proposed developments and promote the creation of a long-term plan for the area that will offer sustainable livelihoods for the local people.

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**Serengeti Highway campaign supported**

We supported a campaign to advocate against building a road through the world famous Serengeti National Park in Tanzania. Through WCST, a campaign was initiated in August 2011 amongst the local communities surrounding Serengeti to convince them to reject the proposed construction of a road, which would harm the fragile ecology of the park which is also an IBA.

At the same time pressure continued to build on the Government of Tanzania to choose an alternative route that does not pass through Serengeti. The German government gave the Government of Tanzania an offer to finance the Southern alternative route which would have less impact on the park. However, the government did not take up the offer. At the same time, a court case was filed at the East African Court of Justice which is yet to be determined.

**Impacts:** The key impacts of multi-level work include enhanced capacity for coordinating site casework and campaigns in Africa and as a result of lessons learnt from Lake Natron, at least 7 other sites in Africa have been saved and secured.

**Engage and capacitate the African BirdLife Partnership for effective site safeguard through targeted discussion and training workshops at regional meetings.**

In March 2010, 11 African Partner participants were supported to attend the Council for Africa Partnership held in Botswana. A capacity building session titled “Dealing with emergency threats to critical sites within BirdLife” was held during the meeting which also involved other participants. This meeting helped in exchanging ideas on how to tackle emerging threats in the African continent including biofuel development and large scale land acquisition by foreign companies.

**Impact:** Capacity for advocacy in Africa boosted amongst Partners in 11 African countries.

**PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED**

The main challenges to project implementation were management changes at WCST and bureaucratic bottlenecks. There were major organisational and staff changes at WSCT over the course of the project including a change in the CEO which heavily impacted on the project.

**LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY AND NEXT STEPS**

The following steps are being taken to ensure sustainability:

- A brochure has been produced to market the Ngare Sero Cultural Boma; we are also working with Tanzanian Tourism Board to raise the profile of the Boma.
- We are developing benefit sharing mechanisms and rules to govern how the local community will share benefits from the eco-tourism enterprise.
- Discussions have started with the district authorities to ensure they take on responsibility for repairs to the water canals in Pinyinyi now that the water intake has been constructed by this project.
• Fundraising efforts continue to be a priority in order to support the continuation of some key activities.

LESSONS LEARNT AND CLOSING REMARKS

The project achieved a huge amount within two years in spite of significant challenges. It is a remarkable achievement that the threat to Lake Natron initially posed by Tata’s mining plan has been withdrawn. Economic analysis through this project now shows that mining of soda ash is not viable. Hopefully this will keep out future investors.

The local communities at Lake Natron now identify with the need to conserve Lake Natron. More importantly, a number of livelihood initiatives were initiated with the potential to improve the lives of the local people. These initiatives should be followed up to ensure that they continue delivering benefits.

Through the project we networked many institutions and worked at local, national, regional and international levels to advocate for sites under threat as well as improve people’s lives. That government institutions and civil society were part of this process provides hope for sustainability.

This project leaves behind a number of case studies, and lessons learnt which can inform future conservation work, not only in Africa but around the world. By sharing the Lake Natron lessons and experiences, other sites across Africa have and will continue to be saved.
Annex 1: LETTER FROM TATA CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES

Letter dated 27th July 2012 from Tata Chemicals Industries to Mr Homi Khusrokhan, President of the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS, BirdLife in India):

Dear Homi,

This has reference to your letter dated 26th July 2012 and our conversation w.r.t Lake Natron. I would like to reiterate that as an outcome of a detailed business review, Tata Chemicals formally exited the Lake Natron Development on 29th January 2009 and all relevant stakeholders were appropriately informed. Tata Chemicals has not been involved with the Lake Natron since that time and we are unaware of any current developments.

With kind regards,

R. Mukundan
Managing Director – Tata Chemicals Industries