African Waterfowl Census January and July 2016

The African Waterfowl Census is an extension of the International Waterfowl Census, co-ordinated by the International Wildfowl and Wetlands Bureau. Zimbabwe has taken part since 1992, and it was decided Africa-wide, that we would count in January and July of every year. The **50th and 51st** counts of the International Waterbird Census (IWC) will be conducted In January and July 2016. Please contact **Ian Riddell**, on gemsaf@mango.zw if you have any queries.

Management of wetlands and their biodiversity worldwide has been central to the aims of the IWC in all the world's major flyways. Information generated through the census has enabled 5 million km**2** of critical areas for waterbirds to be identified, including Ramsar Sites, World Heritage Sites and network sites in all flyways, and Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs). The status of 871 waterbird species is regularly assessed, using data from the census to support prioritising conservation action by feeding into the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and the Waterbird Population Estimates. Therefore the International Waterbird Census has become a vital source of information for the conservation and management of wetlands and waterbirds around the world.

BirdLife Zimbabwe greatly appreciates the commitment of the counters and observers who volunteer their time and effort to collect the information, which also is of great value to our Zimbabwean data base, and encourages fresh support from new participants. So head out to your favourite sites as close to the 15th January as possible and count those waterbirds!

All our data goes to Wetlands International in The Netherlands. They prefer a mid-January and mid-July counting date but will

accept information a month either side of this, even if some of this is excluded from certain analyses, so if you are at a good spot, do count those birds!

About 128 sites were counted in July 2015 with some 1500 records – this amounted to around 18 893 birds!