

## **Abstract**

Kenya has over 70 diurnal birds of prey (raptors) in addition to 19 nocturnal birds of prey (owls). They are classified into 4 distinct families –Falconidae (falcons), Acciptridae (diurnal birds of prey except falcons), Tytonidae (barn owls) and Strigidae (typical owls). This rich diversity of birds of prey is due to Kenya's position across the equator, the variety of habitats and also being in the migratory flyway. Most of the birds of prey in Kenya are residents; however about 30 species are palaeartic or afrotropical migrant species.

None of the diurnal species is endemic, but Sokoke Scops Owl was until recently only known from Arabuko-sokoke forest in Kenya. A total of nine species are listed in the *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*, several of them as endangered the second highest threat category. A further nine species are listed as near-threatened. Threats to birds of prey in Kenya range from habitat destruction and fragmentation, collision and electrocution by powerlines and wind farms to persecution and poisoning. In a recent case study around the Masai Mara National Reserve, a decline of 25% of the population of scavenging birds of prey was recorded in about 20 years. As a result some species e.g. Egyptian Vulture (once a common bird in the Mara) are now close to extinction.

Conservation organizations such as the National Museums of Kenya, Raptor Working Group of the EANHS and the Peregrine Fund are at the forefront of implementing various conservation actions and this includes development of species action plans, advocacy for review of policy and legislation, awareness campaigns including development of conservation partnerships with the energy industry.