



The don was speaking yesterday during an event to mark the World Migratory Bird Day that was jointly organized by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism and supported by the Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature, Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BNUB) of Germany.



He said more awareness was needed to strengthen the fight against illegal killing of migratory birds.



According to Dr. Jasson, shoebill and cranes birds were among birds in the country at high risk of illegal trade, fetching between \$15,000 and \$20,000 per bird and between \$4,500 and \$8,500 in black the market.



“Only 500 shoebill birds remain in Tanzania. Data shows that between 1990 and 2000, 94 birds were exported” he explained

Other birds which are at risk include parrots lovebirds, finches, turaco, vultures – ruppells griffon, lappet faced, flamingos, white pelican, ground hornbill and trogons.

Dr. Jasson added that all African parrots were threatened by trade and all parrots in Tanzania had narrow distribution, with the exception of the brown parrot. He said grey and red-fronted parrots had the smallest distribution range.

Habitats were also at risk, especially woodlands, he said. “Although many species are affected by trade including illegal trade, few of them are seriously affected, small populations, narrow distribution and recent decline conservation challenge,” he elaborated.

He noted that many birds have also died in the process of being trapped and shipped overseas as most methods were indiscriminate and untargeted species were regularly caught. In unskilled hands, the use of nets might result in high casualties and predation.

Dr. Jasson stressed that “heavy mortality occurs between capture and export, with estimates as high as 50 percent. Trapping usually takes place in remote rural areas and is carried out by native people wishing to supplement their income.”

According to thee don, after trapping birds were transferred into bags, baskets, small boxes or crates.

He proposed that in order to protect migratory birds the authorities should establish a smart system to avoid forgery of import and export documents and wildlife officials be positioned at major exit points, especially at airports, ports and at borders. In her opening remarks, Dr. Flola Magige, Head of Zoology Department called on the public and various stakeholders to join forces and work together to conserve migratory birds and their habitat.

She explained that yesterday’s event was meant to raise more public awareness on the threat facing migratory birds so the species could also be protected.

In his presentation, Dr. Chacha Werema, a lecturer with the Zoology Department, explained that there was a wide range of reasons for illegal killing and taking and trade in birds, including subsistence uses, recreational activities, organized crime and traditional practices

This year’s World Migratory Bird Day theme was ‘And when the skies fall silent? Stop the illegal killing, taking and trade!’

