

TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2016

Plea to ban illegal birds trade



Yellow Collared Lovebirds of Tanzania

In Summary

Experts say Tanzania loses a big number of migratory birds each year owing to illegal killing, capturing and trading of the creatures in recent years

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By Patrick Kisembo @TheCitizenTz news@tz.nationmedia.com

Dar es Salaam. Animal experts at the University of Dar es Salaam have warned that the increasing pace of illegal killing, capturing and trading in wild birds is threatening to wipe out various species of creatures.

The warning was issued in Dar es Salaam yesterday at a symposium organised by the UDSM Department of Zoology as part of the celebration of the World Migratory Bird Day held on May 10 every year.

Opening the symposium, the head of the department, Dr Flora Magige, who doubles as a senior lecturer at the UDSM, said they have witnessed incredible number of migratory birds being lost each year as a result of illegal killing, taking and trading in recent years.

“Motives behind these illicit activities vary and the toll they take on the creatures is incredible, as millions of birds are killed each year - numbers that are totally unsustainable,” she lamented.

Dr Jasson John, another senior lecturer, revealed that a big market in Europe, which bought birds from Tanzania for its various interests, was to blame for causing the illegal trade of birds in Tanzania.

Dr John said many bird species were about to perish following the law in Tanzania, unlike in the neighbouring Kenya, allowing to import and export birds.

Tanzania has 1,148 types of birds, 24 species of which are found in Tanzania only, he said, adding: “But when it comes to birds, no species is safe from illegal trade.”

He said many took advantage of countries which have not signed treaties to control or ban the trade of birds to illegally buy various species, resulting into the emergence of illegal routes for smuggling the birds.

According to the expert, all African birds, especially parrots, were at risk of extinction, as their remaining small populations were narrowly distributed.

Dr Chacha Werema, another expert, said besides deaths, other threats migrating birds were facing included infections compounded by habitats which were not conducive to them. Other threats include deforestation, predation, hunting and capturing them and killing them for sale or domestic consumption.

These challenges must tackled if birds are to be saved from extinction, she said.



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