



Workshop of the Working Group for the Development of the AEWA Plan of Action for Africa 2019-2027

Atelier du groupe de travail dédié à l'élaboration du Plan d'action de l'AEWA pour l'Afrique 2019-2027

10 - 12 October / octobre 2017 – Dakar



AEWA Implementation in Swaziland

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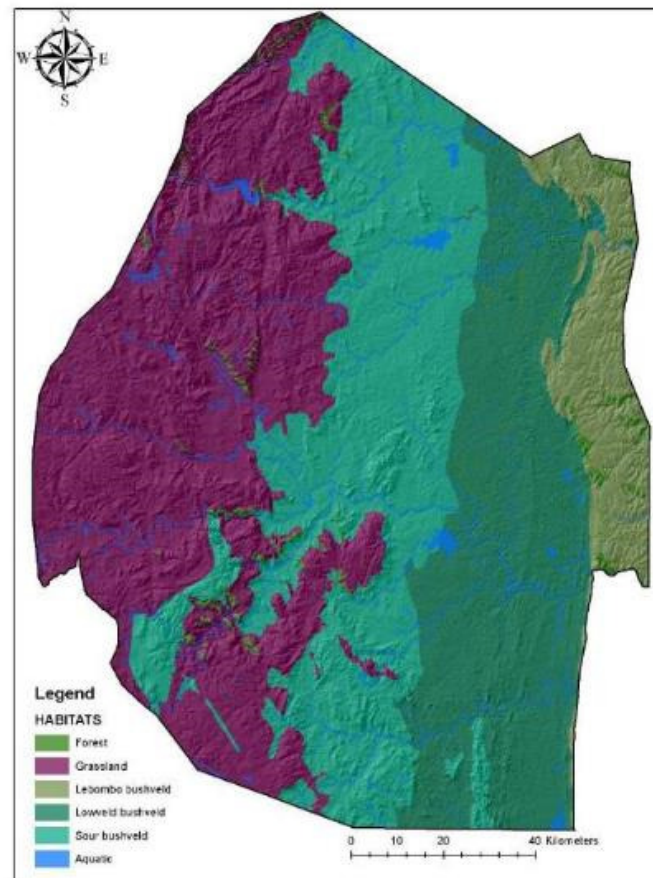
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BACKGROUND

- Size – 17,365 sq. km
- Climate
- Party to AEWA since 1 January 2013
- 68 AEWA species found in Swaziland
- Important for migratory waterbirds using the East Atlantic, East Asia/East Africa and Black Sea/Mediterranean Flyways





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Migratory waterbirds species richness

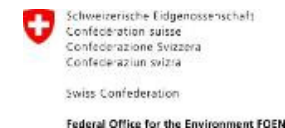
- ✓ Strong correlation with wetland distribution.
- ✓ Key habitats protected within both formal (gazette) and informal protected areas (both private and public)



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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AEWA POAA

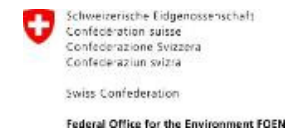
Activity	Relevant Target/Result/Action of the AEWA PoAA
Implementing a GEF Project (up to 2020) for a "Strengthening the Protected Areas System of Swaziland" project – includes key wetland habitats in communal areas	Targets 1.1, 1.2, 3.1
Identified important wetlands and waterbird habitats in Swaziland	Target 1.1, 3.1
Environmental education through radio programmes, and other electronic media	Target 4.3
Training and capacity building on the flyway approach to the conservation and wise use of waterbirds – to locals	Target 4
Training on research using geospatial/mapping technologies Collaboration between University of Swaziland and Swaziland National Trust Commission in developing a database and monitoring programme for waterfowl (on-going).	Targets 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3



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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AEWA POAA

Activity	Relevant Target/Result/Action of the AEWA PoAA
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SNTC (Amendment) Bill includes new 'Special habitat' category of protected areas which would include stopover sites or similar waterfowl habitat.• Draft Water Policy – protection of wetland ecosystems and habitats is one of the pillars.• Game Act protects waterbirds as « royal game » and prohibits use of poison baits.• Ban and restriction of certain chemicals (under the Rotterdam Convention). Currently working on persistent organic pollutants (POPs) with UNEP for an overarching national act dealing with chemicals.	Target 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3
Some AEWA strategies integrated into NBSAP 2	Target 1.1, 1.2, 3.1



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PRIORITIZATION OF ACTIONS IN THE AEWA POAA

- To undertake conservation measures so as to improve or maintain the conservation status of waterbird species and their populations **(habitat management/protected area expansion and strengthening)**
- To increase knowledge about species and their populations, flyways and threats to them as a basis for conservation action **(research and monitoring)**
- To improve Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) about migratory waterbird species, their flyways, their role in alleviating poverty, threats to them and the need for measures to conserve them and their habitats





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HENDRICK VAN ECK DAM

- Constructed in 1970 for irrigation of sugarcane fields in the Big Bend area.
- Located within the 2,777 ha Mhloosinga Nature Reserve (owned by Ubombo Sugar) and covers 128-135 ha.
- When water levels are low, the dam is a major magnet for waterfowl and other waterbirds.
- Ramsar site (Criterion 3)






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Hendrick Van Eck Dam

Legend



Google Earth

Image © 2017 CNES / Airbus



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SAND RIVER DAM

- Constructed in 1965 for irrigation of sugarcane fields in the Tshaneni-Mhlume area.
- Located within the IYSIS cattle ranch (owned by Royal Swaziland Sugar Corporation) and covers 637.26 ha (within the 20,016 ha ranch).
- The dam is a major magnet for waterfowl and other waterbirds, particularly when water levels are low.
- Tourism hotspot
- Ramsar site (Criterion 3)





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HAWANE DAM

- Constructed in 1984 to supply the capital city, Mbabane, with fresh water.
- Surface area covered by water is 69-75 ha (within the 231.1463 ha Hawane Nature Reserve), and the dam inundated montane grassland and swamps.
- Prior to inundation, this was the only site in the country for Wattled Crane.
- Ramsar site (Criterion 2)





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Mr. Almor Oliveira Ponds

- Local industrialist/entrepreneur
- Avid birder and nature conservator
- Located within an industrial town (Matsapha).
- Privately owned and maintained.
- Hundreds of birds migrate to this area every single year...beginning of the dry season.





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PAGE 20 Times of Swaziland - Thursday, December 15, 2015

ENVIRONMENTAL

SD MOVES TO PROTECT MIGRATORY BIRDS NESTING IN THE COUNTRY

... commemorates World Migratory Bird Day 2015

SWAZILAND - The country, through SNTC, has taken steps towards protecting migratory birds in the country.

According to the Swaziland National Trust Conservation (SNTC), established in a capacity to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), also known as CMS or Bonn Convention, and the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA).

These are two international wildlife treaties administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Swaziland signed the agreement in 2012 and SNTC is the implementing agency. These explained that

the agreement covers 253 species of birds, including dependent on Swaziland for at least part of their annual cycle.

"Many migrating birds such as Crane, Duck, Shorebird and Eagle meet demands of thousands of people, from sport hunters, ornithologists, ecotourists, and others, and this is causing the loss, fragmentation and degradation of their habitats along the birds' migratory routes and threatening their survival," said SNTC.

World Migratory Bird Day is a global event and is celebrated in many countries, and this year has been the first time it has been celebrated in Swaziland.

SD celebrates next to endangered bird nesting site

The site chosen for this year's celebration was very appropriate in the sense that it is a protected area in the country, and it is a nesting site for the endangered Southern Bald Ibis. The site is located in the Mkhondwe Nature Reserve, near the town of Mkhondwe.

The site is a large, open, grassy area with some trees and shrubs. It is a nesting site for the Southern Bald Ibis, which is a large, white, long-necked bird with a long, straight beak. The birds are known for their unique appearance and their ability to fly long distances.

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About the Southern Bald Ibis

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What you can do to help migratory birds

- Keep your distance. Birds need space for feeding, nesting, and other daily activities. Approach them slowly and quietly. Avoid making sudden movements or loud noises.
- Respect natural habitats. Do not enter areas that are important for birds. Do not remove nesting material or eggs.
- Track others. Learn to identify the different kinds of birds that are present in your area.

CONSERVATION STATUS OF THE SOUTHERN BALD IBIS

The Southern Bald Ibis is currently listed as vulnerable by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. It is a large, white, long-necked bird with a long, straight beak. It is found in the Mkhondwe Nature Reserve, near the town of Mkhondwe.

Captured


Furthermore, another bird was captured in order to collect the egg and examine the bird's health. The bird was captured in a net and taken to the Mkhondwe Nature Reserve.

The Mkhondwe Nature Reserve is a large, open, grassy area with some trees and shrubs. It is a nesting site for the Southern Bald Ibis, which is a large, white, long-necked bird with a long, straight beak. The birds are known for their unique appearance and their ability to fly long distances.



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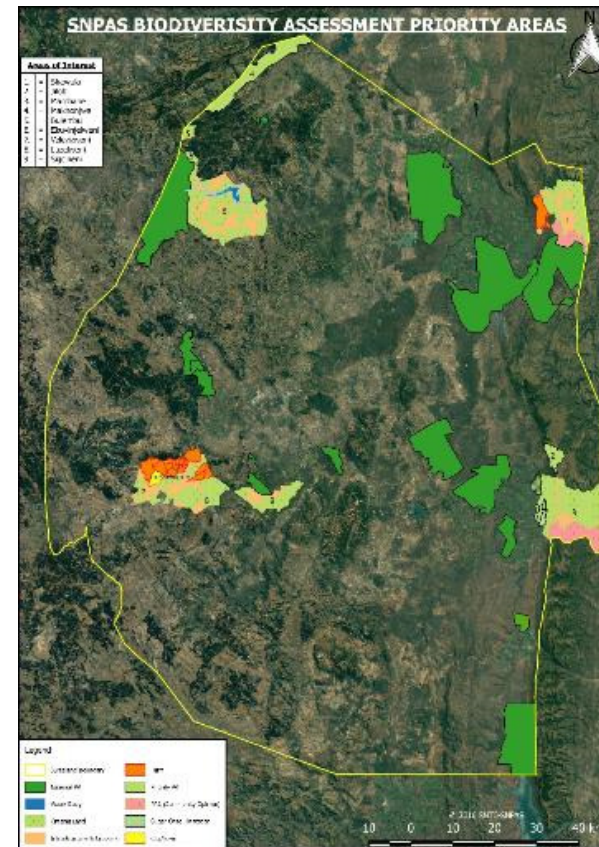


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Proposed and existing protected areas

- Development of Chiefdom Development Plans
 - Community-level land use planning
 - Includes wetlands/habitat protection
- Involvement of local communities in participatory mapping exercises
- Landscape approach being used





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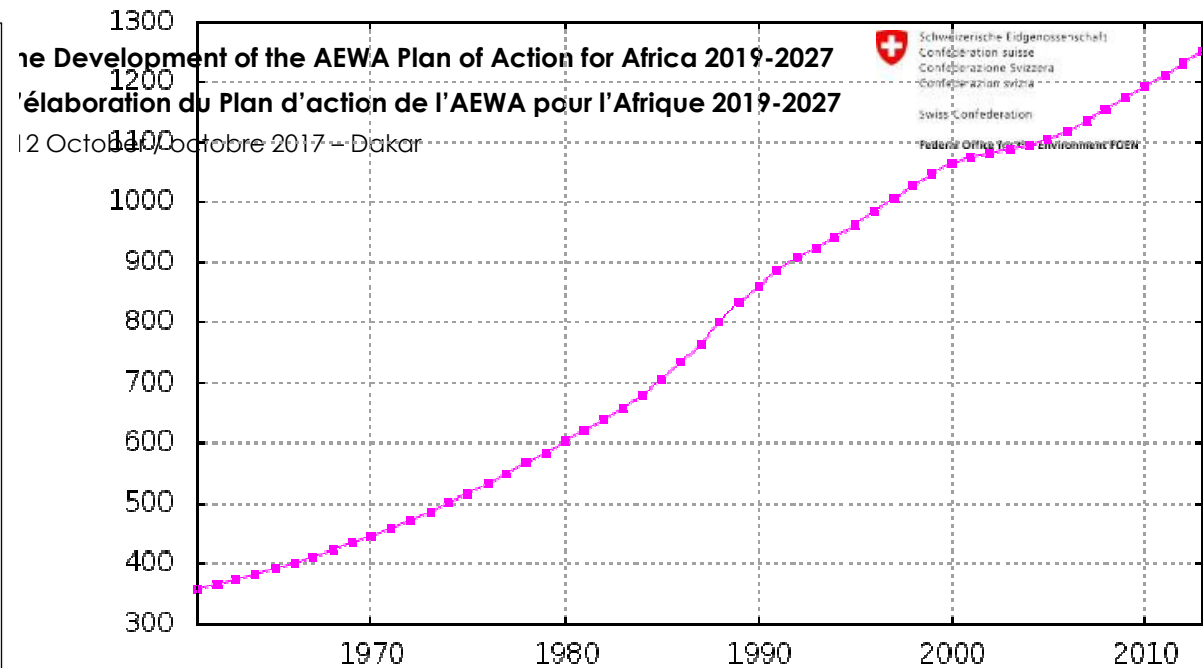
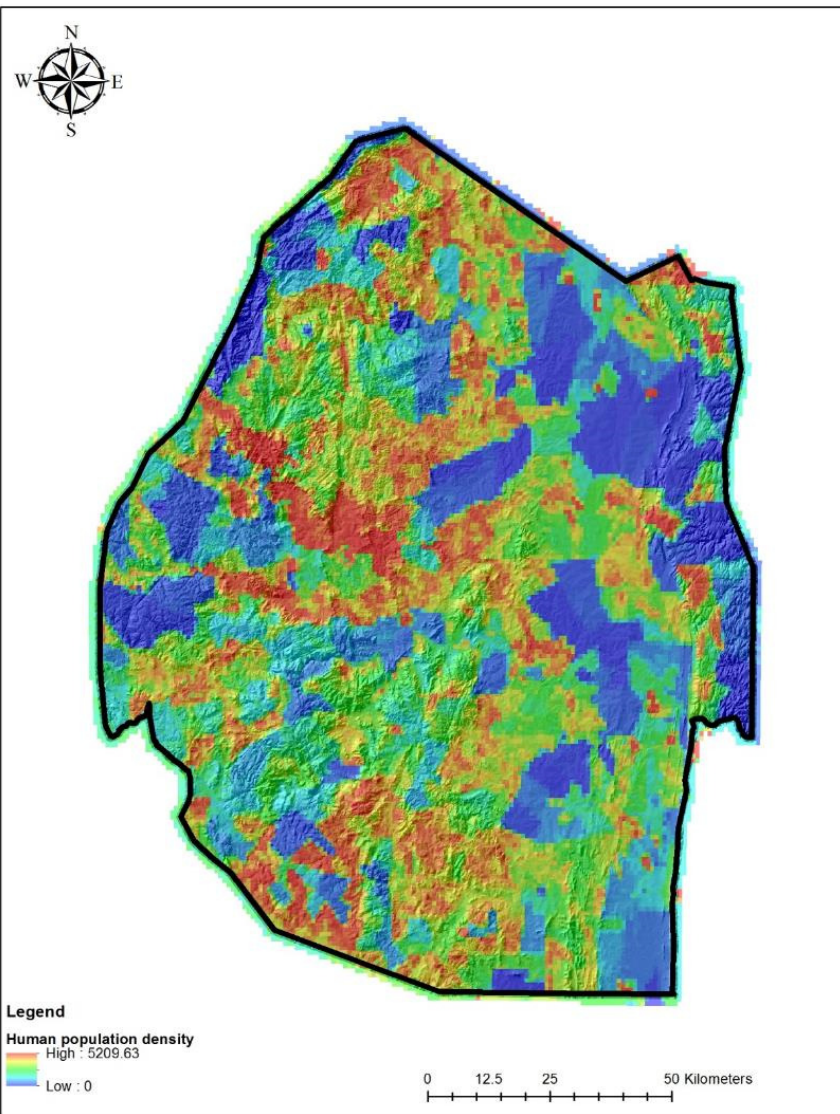
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CHALLENGES

- Limited expertise (ornithologists in particular) – fewer counts/censuses
- Limited time allocation for AEWA (<5%) considering other commitments – the elephant in the room!
- Demographic pressures (urbanization...
- Conflicting land uses/increasing demand for land (settlements, agriculture, etc)
- Climate change and variability (changes in hydrological regimes/drying of some wetlands, frequent droughts)





- Increasing population (increasing demand for land and resources)
- Less population in protected areas, well-managed ranches and plantations.
- Need for conservation measures in areas outside of private ranches and protected areas in consultation with communities.
- Pressure from competition with other land uses including sugarcane expansion and human settlements, among others.

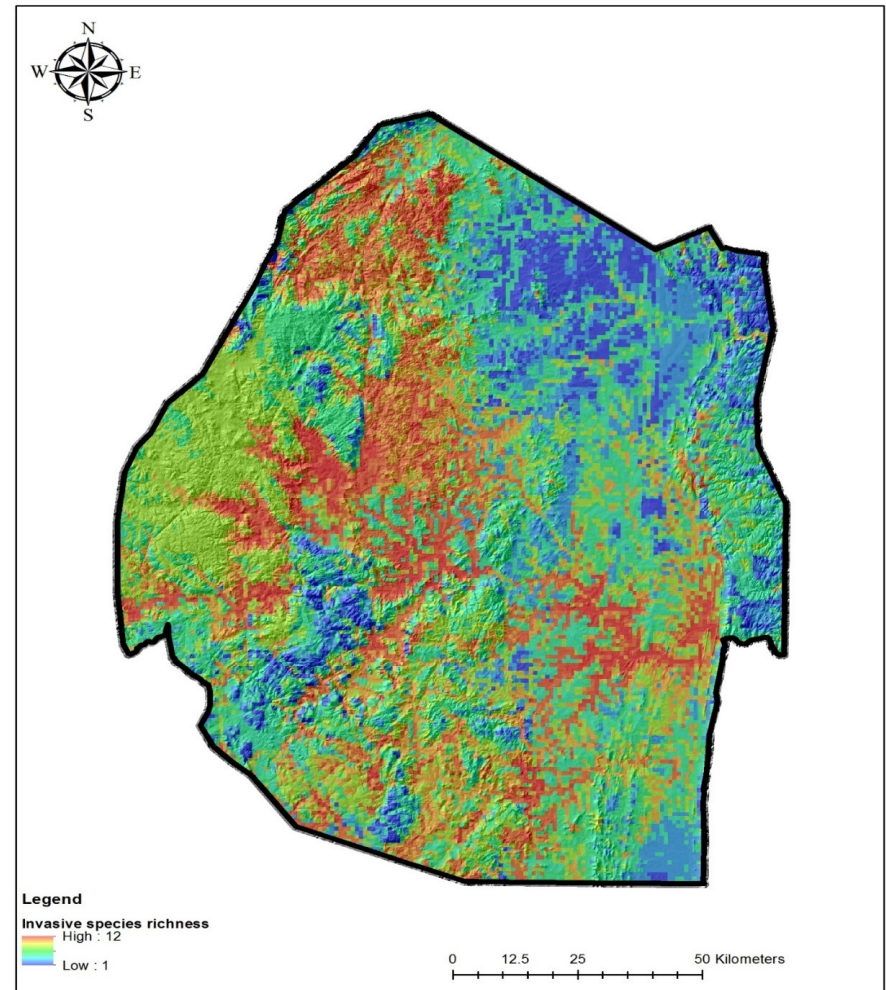


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Alien plant invasion pressure

- ✓ Modelled from aerial mapping data and tree atlas data
- ✓ *Chromolaena odorata*, *Lantana camara*, *Psidium guajava*, *Acacia mearnsii*, amongst several other species are invading rangelands and most ecosystems affected.
- ✓ Highly disturbed/highly populated areas are invasion hotspots
- ✓ Wetlands/waterbird habitat not spared



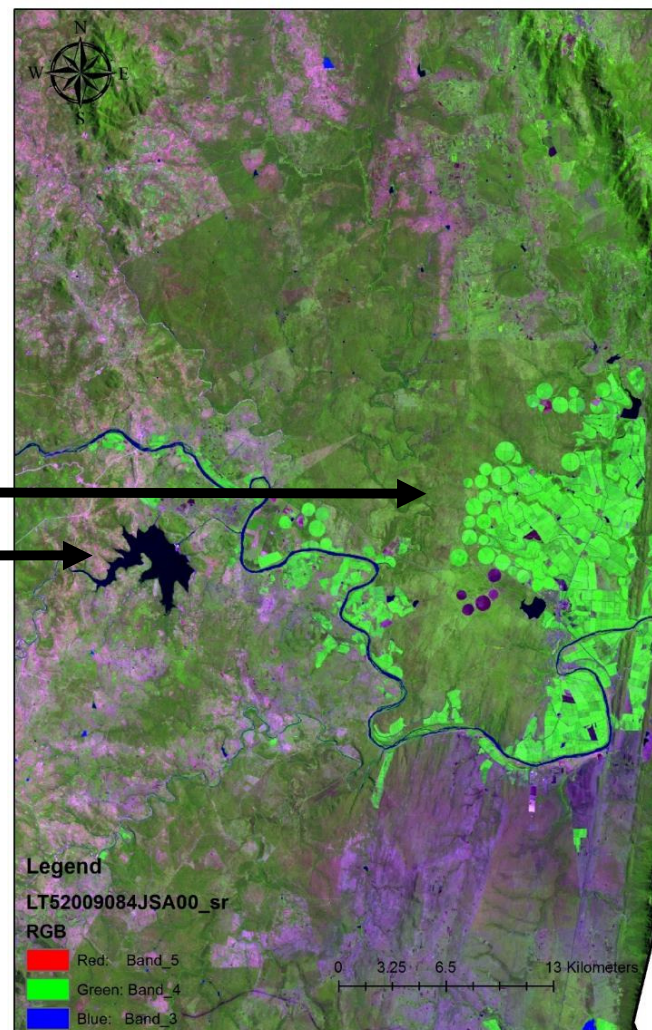
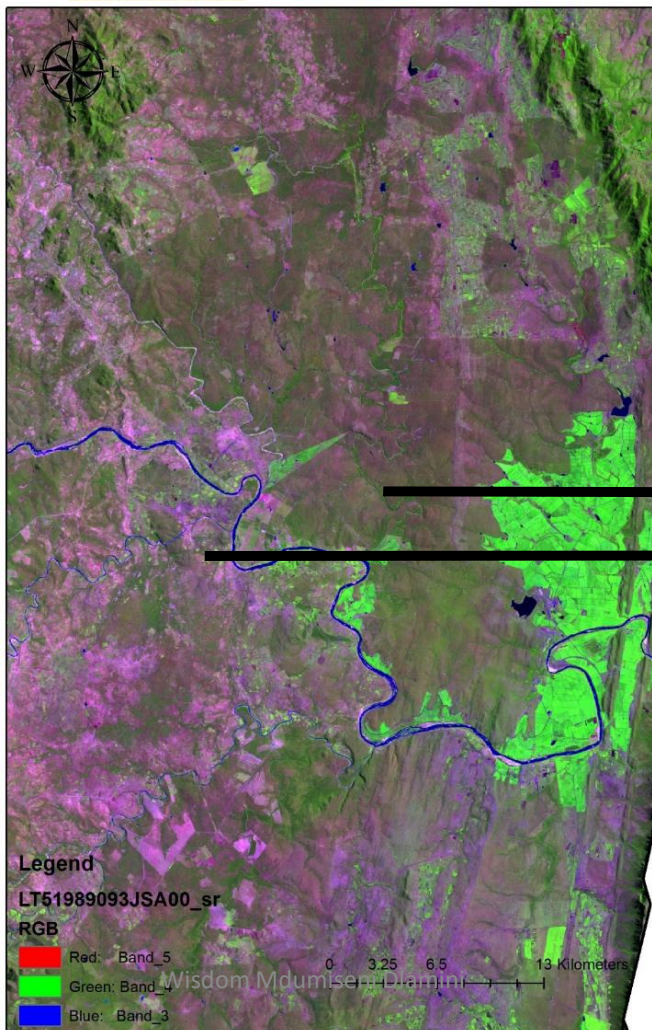
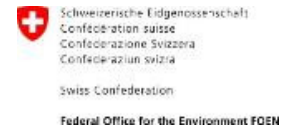
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Note conversion to sugarcane

Major income earner (~52% of agric output, 35% of agric employment and 18% of GDP)

Between 2008 and 2016 – area under cultivation rose from 52,000 to more than 65,000



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OPPORTUNITIES

- Private sector participation is very key (from both a resources and land ownership point of view)
- Citizen science is very key in the identification and monitoring of waterbirds
- Public-Private sector-University partnerships for research.
 - Capacity building/knowledge sharing and transfer - one of our students and an IWC data management trainee is now a renowned birder and discovered two new occurrences in a recent survey.
- There is still a need for concerted efforts to identify flyway dynamics for most species and enhance collaboration between countries.
- Cultural heritage intricately linked to biodiversity.





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Umhlanga (Reed) ceremony

- Thousands of young girls cut the reeds (*Phragmites* species) as part of the annual *Umhlanga* ceremony
- The species is found in wetlands (Ramsar sites), hence need for their conservation for its perpetuity.
- His Majesty the King advocates for the protection of the wetlands as part of cultural heritage.





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•THANK YOU!
•MERCİ!
•SIYABONGA!

