

Habitat restoration- Chisamba IBA



BWZ has sustained species population monitoring in different IBAs such as Chisamba IBA for both the Zambian Barbet and 4 species of Vultures and is keen to partner with as many partners; individuals, farm owners and organizations, in insuring the habitats of these birds.

As an activity within Partnership of the Vulture Safe Zones (VSZs) initiative <https://www.birdwatchzambia.org/vulture-safe-zones-2/> and to mitigate loss of trees, tree planting of native species is one activity undertaken by BWZ.

Vultures benefit from large trees that offer; a complete habitat - provides food, shelter and nesting areas. At the VSZs, large groups of vultures weighing on average about 5kgs, roost and occupy the large trees. As a result of this, the trees tend to lose their leaves and branches and die off eventually. This is because the fecal matter of vultures is highly acidic.

The Red Mahogany, locally known as '*mululu*' is a fast-growing tree which quickly brings back cover to a degraded area. BWZ provides saplings of such species to farmers under the VSZ initiative. The *mululu* is used by different bird species for feeding, shade and roosting. The Zambian Barbets for example, an endemic bird to Zambia which nests/roosts in the Fig trees spends time away from their cavities perched and sourcing their food from different trees including the '*mululu*'. Other trees that we can consider planting for the same purpose are the Natal Mahogany ('*musikili*'), Fig trees ('*mukuyu*') and the White Acacia ('*musangu*').

As long as the vegetation on these farms support species' population of iconic birds such as the Vultures and remains suitable for endemic birds such as the Zambian Barbet in the long term, it is cardinal to 'insure' this vegetation by engaging in tree planting activities of appropriate species.

