Emmanuel Ncube Abstract

Abstract

Title

Human depredation threatens the conservation of bird species especially in rural areas where birds are hunted for protein. This study explored species found in Thekwane village of Bulilima district in Plumtree, Zimbabwe, from July to September 2020. A survey was conducted to assess bird's flight initiation distance (FID) across various habitats and times of the day. Fifty key informants reported which bird species were hunted by locals. A desktop survey was done to determine the average body mass and conservation status according to IUCN for all species recorded. The effect of body mass, time of the day, perch type/height, starting distance, flock size, hunting pressure and habitat type on FID was investigated using generalised linear models. Chi- square tests were used to explore association between key informants' citation frequency of birds and their level of hunting. The key informants cited 49

species commonly used for protein provision, while 58 species were recorded during FID measurements. FID increased with body mass, and the birds that were perching on the ground had longer FIDs. There was a linear positive relationship between FID and starting distance and large flocks had longer FIDs. However hunting pressure and habitat type had no significant relationship with FID. Our results suggest that the larger bird species had less tolerance to approaching humans and birds that were less likely to be hunted by people had similar levels of wariness compared to those that are more likely to be hunted.