



## **World Migratory Bird Day 2013 – “Networking for migratory birds”**

### **Statement from Dr. Marco Barbieri**

#### **Acting Executive Secretary of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA)**



Since joining the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement in 2011, I have watched World Migratory Bird Day more than double in size in just a couple of years. This incredible expansion is the result of the hard work of the World Migratory Bird Day team both at the UNEP/AEWA and the UNEP/CMS Secretariats in Bonn, but more importantly, it is a result of the hard work and initiative of the hundreds of event organizers, partner organizations and other dedicated groups around the world that are the true motor of the campaign and an inspiring example each year of how to promote and work towards the common goal of global migratory bird conservation.

World Migratory Bird Day aims to celebrate migratory birds as one of the most spectacular marvels of the natural world, but the campaign also aims to highlight the growing number of threats the birds face in a rapidly changing global environment. As many, if not all of these threats are the result of human activities, it is our (mankind’s) collective responsibility to mitigate and, as far as possible, eliminate those threats so that migratory birds will be able to continue undertaking their often epic journeys for the foreseeable future.

This year’s theme, “Networking for migratory birds”, aims to highlight a particular aspect of the conservation of migratory species, that is their need to rely on a network of suitable habitats along their migration routes. Throughout their seasonal migration cycle, birds need suitable places to breed, rear their chicks, moult, refuel and rest during migration, and overwinter. However, many of these habitats are rapidly getting degraded or destroyed due to direct and indirect pressure from human activities, including climate change. Without active conservation efforts, many of these sites are at risk in the very near future. Therefore, this year’s theme also aims to emphasize that it is crucially important that governments, organizations and individuals work together to protect the habitats and networks of sites that migratory birds use in all countries along their migration routes.

More than ever, it is clear that the international community must work together to conserve migratory birds and the natural environment that we all rely on to survive. Under AEWA, 71 countries and the European Union have already committed to working together towards the conservation and sustainable management of migratory waterbirds across a geographic area which spans Africa, Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia, Greenland and the Canadian Archipelago.

As an intergovernmental treaty developed under the framework of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), AEWA brings together these countries and the wider international conservation community in an effort to establish coordinated conservation measures for migratory waterbirds.

Migratory bird conservation is a unique challenge because the birds do not heed the national borders between our countries as they fly each year along their migration routes. For this reason, it is not possible for only one country to act alone, or even for many countries to act independently to conserve migratory birds as the inaction of one country can jeopardize the conservation efforts of many along the bird's migration routes. That is why agreements such as AEWA are so important; they embody the collective desire and will to work together to protect our shared and valued natural resources.

I would therefore like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all World Migratory Bird Day partners, event organizers and the many other committed individuals and organizations for their active involvement and support to this year's WMBD campaign. It is only by working together that we can ensure that migratory birds will be able to continue their amazing journeys and survive as an important part of our natural environment.

On behalf of the entire UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and the WMBD 2013 Campaign Team, I would like to wish all of us, wherever we may be on this planet, a successful WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY on 11-12 May 2013!



Dr. Marco Barbieri

Acting Executive Secretary, African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (UNEP/AEWA)