



Federal Ministry for the
Environment, Nature Conservation
and Nuclear Safety

World Migratory Bird Day 2013 “Networking for migratory birds”

**Statement from Herr Peter Altmaier,
Federal Environment Minister of Germany**

**German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and
Nuclear Safety (BMU)**



In 1962, over 50 years ago, Rachel Carson wrote her famous book "Silent Spring". Spring would indeed be silent without the huge flocks of migratory birds arriving back to Europe following wintering in Africa and Asia Minor and enriching the sounds of nature with their impressive spring songs. Germany is particularly happy to listen to singing birds this year following an unexpectedly long winter as the birds chose to stay in warmer regions during their spring migration.

Today Rachel Carson is still working hard to remind us that the existence of birds in nature is not something to be taken for granted. Action is needed to tackle the threats endangering our wildlife such as poaching, poisoning, pollution, habitat degradation and other obstacles to bird migration. Even nowadays:

- The poisoning, catching and illegal killing of raptors is a problem,
- Capture of animals with lime sticks and other cruel capture and killing methods are still widespread throughout Mediterranean regions,
- In North Africa unselective net captures are still widespread along the Egyptian coast leaving birds with little or no chance of escape in bottleneck areas,
- Fish eating birds such as cormorants and herons are - even in the middle of Europe - put under a lot of pressure by fishermen.



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Each year World Migratory Bird Day reminds us of the need to bring these important environmental problems to public attention. Conservation efforts have been successful for some of our European bird species. However, for birds in dire straits a strong reminder is needed: it is time for joint actions that are effective on an international conservation level.

The World Migratory Bird Day campaign this year is themed “Networking for migratory birds”. This is really what we need and have in mind for governments co-operating under CMS, AEWA, ACAP, the Raptors Memorandum of Understanding as well as other instruments for conservation.

We in Germany are ready and willing to share our expertise in order to overcome obstacles to bird migration. “Wings Over Wetlands” marks one of our major contributions for migratory birds and we continue to give support to Africa as part of the ongoing Wadden Sea Flyway Cooperation project. However, we are also keen to share our knowledge with regards to preventing the collision and electrocution of birds at wind farms and on power lines. This is an issue of high importance as Germany prepares to transform its energy system in the near future.

Bird conservation cannot succeed without commitment from the wider public, especially from “bird workers” who voluntarily assist in bird monitoring and observation, protecting nests and helping to maintain suitable habitats. On World Migratory Bird Day we recognize, what these bird workers all over the world have achieved. I would like to thank these people for their enthusiasm and encourage them to continue in their efforts. This includes the NGOs that constantly raise their voice to care for bird species in danger. Let us hope that their hard work and network will serve to help bird conservation!

I would like to congratulate CMS and AEWA on this important initiative.

Herr Peter Altmaier

**Federal Environment Minister of Germany, German Federal Ministry for the Environment,
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