



## World Migratory Bird Day

### Fact Sheet

#### World Migratory Bird Day Basics

- World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) is an annual worldwide celebration of migratory birds and an awareness-raising campaign highlighting the need for the conservation of both migratory birds and their habitats.  
**Timing:** Second weekend in May each year.
- **Initial launch:** 2006. This year will be the 8<sup>th</sup> annual World Migratory Bird Day celebration.
- **Global celebrations:** For this year's **World Migratory Bird Day** on 11-12 May, more than 300 events are registered in 78 countries all across the world.
- WMBD 2013 is organized by two international wildlife treaties - the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), which are administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Partners: BirdLife International, Wetlands International, the East Asian – Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) and the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC).

[Link to Existing Partnerships & Working Groups for Migratory Bird Conservation](#)

#### The Theme for World Migratory Bird Day 2013

- This year's WMBD theme "**Networking for migratory birds**" highlights the importance of networks of sites for migratory birds along their migration routes.
- Importance of ecological networks:
  - Suitable habitats are vital for migratory birds as they provide key areas necessary for feeding, resting, breeding and wintering. However, human activities, directly or indirectly, damage these sites through habitat fragmentation and degradation, thereby posing a grave threat to migratory bird species. These important habitats are disappearing and with them the networks that connect them. With limited access to these important sites, birds may not survive their demanding journeys.

- Networking for conservation:
  - This year's theme also highlights the importance of networking amongst governments, conservation organizations and dedicated people to conserve migratory birds by establishing global connections. Joint action in form of international cooperation is needed, since conservation efforts in one country can be completely jeopardized by the loss of a single site in another.

## **World Migratory Bird Day in light of other campaigns, such as UNEP's *Think Eat Save* Campaign**

- **World Migratory Bird Day:** Part of a growing network of environmental awareness raising campaigns organized under UNEP. It serves to raise awareness of the effects of human activities on the global environment. This goal is also shared by the ***Think Eat Save*** campaign which highlights the consequences of irresponsible food handling. Although the campaigns aim to highlight different environmental issues, their themes are interconnected:
- **Overfishing:**

Overfishing the oceans is not just a concern for sustaining global fisheries that feed millions of people but also a threat to migratory birds as food that is needed by birds to survive becomes less available. Roughly 70% of fish caught by trawling is discarded. In Delaware Bay, located on the West Atlantic Flyway, overharvesting of horseshoe crabs has resulted in a shortage of crab eggs for the Red Knot. As a result, their population decreased from over 100,000 birds in 2001 to fewer than 20,000 in 2011.
- **Unsustainable use:**

Many migratory birds are also being hunted unsustainably. According to Wildlife Extra, one migratory songbird is killed every four seconds in Cyprus for a traditional dish called "Ambelopoulia", which is often served by restaurants in popular tourist destinations.

## **Worldwide Events**

Overall, more than 300 events have been registered in 78 countries (as of 10.05.2013): Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Kosovo (UN Resolution 1244), Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Tunisia, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Venezuela, Yemen.

## **A small selection of WMBD 2013 events**

**Canada** - The City of Vancouver has been very active in celebrating WMBD in the past. This year, 8 different WMBD events are being organized by the City of Vancouver, Stanley Park Ecology Society, Bird Studies Canada and Nature Vancouver. The events include birdwatching activities at various parks throughout the city and lectures by renowned biologists, researchers and the Director of Bird Studies Canada. Read about all the Vancouver events [here](#).

**India** - 'Birds of Jhunjhunu' is the event name of this year's WMBD celebration in Beed, Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan, India. Local people are invited to find out more about bird biodiversity and migration in their area. Event organizers have planned birdwatching, bird census and further activities to raise awareness about migratory birds.

**Kenya** - The launching country of WMBD will host a regional event at Lake Elmenteita for this year's celebration. Under guidance from Nature Kenya, the Naivasha Basin Conservation Forum (NBCF) has organized birdwatching and bird ringing activities. The event will be topped off with speeches addressing the importance of WMBD itself as well as Lake Naivasha - an important habitat for migratory birds.

**Australia** - This year, Brisbane City Council's Boondall Wetlands Environment Centre is organizing an event to inform people about the importance of protecting migratory birds and their habitats in Australia. The Boondall Wetlands are located at the edge of Moreton Bay and host more than 40,000 migratory shorebirds from September to April each year. Staff and volunteers will be present to answer questions about migratory birds. Read more about the event at the Boondall Wetlands [here](#).

**United Arab Emirates** - At the Houbara Conservation Center, pupils will have the opportunity to assist with the release of a large bird, the Houbara Bustard, occurring in the United Arab Emirates. In addition, a video about the migration of this bird species will be shown during the WMBD event. Read more about this event [here](#).

For more information about the events (full descriptions, contact details, locations), please follow the links to the World Migratory Bird Day website:

### **All Registered Activities**

[http://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org/2013/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=9&Itemid=9](http://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org/2013/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9&Itemid=9)

### **Global WMBD Event Map**

[http://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org/2013/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=50&Itemid=33](http://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org/2013/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=50&Itemid=33)

## **Statements to mark World Migratory Bird Day 2013**

**Statements of heads of organizations and leading scientists are available here:**

[www.worldmigratorybirdday.org/statements](http://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org/statements)

## **Ecological networks: Importance and threats**

Ecological networks are a system of connected landscape elements, which play a vital role for migratory birds during their voyage. They provide key sites along migration routes, where birds can find food and shelter to recover from their strenuous journeys.

Ecological networks consist of four main elements: Core areas, corridors, buffer zones, sustainable-use areas. Core areas are of primary importance for the conservation of biodiversity. Corridors function to maintain ecological or environmental connections by providing physical links between the core areas. Corridors can be further narrowed down into landscape corridors, linear corridors and stepping stone corridors. Buffer zones serve to protect the network from potentially damaging external influences. Sustainable-use areas are areas where opportunities for the sustainable use of natural resources together with maintenance of most ecosystem services are exploited.

## **The Wadden Sea UNESCO World Heritage Site: An Important stop-over site**

Within Europe, the 'Wadden Sea' is an important stop-over site for migratory birds. Having the status of a 'UNESCO World Heritage Site', it is not only a protected area but considered to be a unique place on planet Earth for migratory birds. It is not unusual to find totals of 6.1 million birds (including non-migratory birds) simultaneously within this coastal wetland area. However, the present status of migratory birds is alarming. On a world-wide scale, twelve per cent of these species are regarded as threatened or at least as near-threatened. The protection of this site is therefore crucial in terms of migratory bird conservation. The 'Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative' aims to conserve migratory birds along the East Atlantic Flyway by collaborating with different countries located along the migration flyway. <http://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/>

## **Flyways: Aerial migration routes**

A flyway is the geographical area covered by a migratory bird over its annual migration cycle. It includes breeding and non-breeding grounds. To ensure effective conservation of avian species, coordinated and joint action along the entire flyway is necessary. There are 25 flyway agreements worldwide, of which 50% exist in the Asia Pacific Region.

## **Habitat loss – A major threat**

Habitat loss is the greatest threat to the survival of migratory birds. For example, the construction of a 33.9 km seawall around the tidal flats of the Saemangeum estuary - an important stop-over site for migratory birds in the Yellow Sea region in Asia - has led to an

estimated decline of 137,000 shorebirds. According to scientists, the worldwide population of the Great Knot might have declined by 20% due to the loss of this one stop-over site.

Over the last century, the number of sites left that are important to birds has decreased by over 50%. Marine pollution, such as plastic and oil products, is also a major threat to the health of migratory birds and their habitats. Plastic can be mistaken for food and ingested by migratory birds while oil sticks to feathers leaving birds unable to fly or protect themselves from cold. Coastal development, one of the fastest forms of development, is estimated to have an impact on 91% of all temperate and tropical coasts by 2050 and will contribute to more than 80% of all marine pollution.

### **Partnerships & Working Groups for Migratory Bird Conservation**

In the United States, migratory bird conservation is implemented by the **‘Migratory Bird Joint Ventures’**. It is a network of Partnerships administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). So far, a total of \$4.5 billion have been invested for habitat conservation. This amount has helped to sustain 15.7 million acres of habitat used by avian migratory species.

**The global partnership of BirdLife International** has the overall goal to conserve birds, their habitats and biodiversity worldwide. BirdLife International works on conservation projects on various levels. They put their focus on key sites, while also being involved in flyway projects and advocacy work to promote the conservation of migratory species. <http://www.birdlife.org/>

**The East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP)** is a voluntary initiative aiming at protecting migratory waterbirds, their habitats and the livelihood of people depending on them. Currently, the EAAFP consists of 29 partners from 15 countries including three intergovernmental agencies, ten international non-governmental organizations and one international business sector. Through their framework they provide ground for international conservation activities along the entire flyway. <http://www.eaaflyway.net/>

**The Birds Directive** is a nature legislation for the protection of wild birds found in the European Union. It covers 27 member states with a network of 5,347 Special Protection Areas. This amounts to over 10% of the EU’s land surface. The Birds Directive’s next steps will be the implementation and management of sites. Their target is to ensure that 80% of species will be secure or improving by 2020. <http://www.face.eu/about-us/eu-laws/birds-directive>

As part of the **African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA)** a working group has been established to protect a vulnerable species - the Lesser White-fronted Goose. This group has developed a Critical Site Network, involving 22 countries located along the flyways of this species. Although the decline of the Lesser White-fronted Goose has not yet come to a halt, it has slowed down due to joint conservation efforts.

**For more information and to arrange interviews, please contact:**

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