



CONVENTION ON WETLANDS
CONVENTION SUR LES ZONES HUMIDES
CONVENCIÓN SOBRE LOS HUMEDALES
(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)



Statement by Christopher Briggs, Secretary General of the Convention on Wetlands, in support of World Migratory Bird Day 2014

We are delighted to join the Secretariat of the Convention on Migratory Species, the Secretariat of the African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement and their partners in celebrating World Migratory Bird Day.

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands aims to protect wetlands and promote their sustainable use. Wetlands such as rivers, lakes, reservoirs and tidal flats are vital for people and wildlife, including migratory birds.

An estimated 50 billion migratory birds each year travel thousands of kilometres, stopping along the way at beaches, lakes, and estuaries that provide them with food, water and rest. If these wetland “refuelling stations” disappear or become degraded – for example if the water is polluted or diverted for other uses – entire populations of birds are at risk.

Ramsar provides tools for protecting these areas. By joining the Convention, Member States designate and commit to maintain “Wetlands of International Importance”, often called Ramsar Sites, and one of the criteria for identifying these wetlands is their role in supporting migrating birds.

Global protection efforts can only be successful if complemented by innovative actions for the conservation of migratory birds and wetlands. The “Destination Flyways” project is developing ecotourism at a selection of sites, most of which are Ramsar Sites, in three continents, along the main flyways used by birds during their migration. Ramsar is proud to be one of the partners in this project.

Wetlands attract millions of tourists each year because of their rich wildlife, their beautiful landscapes and the opportunities they offer for recreation. The sustainable tourism initiatives developed by the Destination Flyways project will raise awareness of the importance of protecting local ecosystems, supporting local livelihoods and ensuring that tourists, the local community and wildlife continue to enjoy wetlands and benefit from the food, water and many other services they provide.

We join our partners in celebrating the Destination Flyways project on World Migratory Bird Day, and we reaffirm our commitment to the success of this important global initiative.