



Saving wetlands
for wildlife & people

World Migratory Bird Day 2014 Destination Flyways: Migratory Birds and Tourism



Statement by Martin Spray CBE, Chief Executive, The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT)

The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT), based in the UK and working across the world, fully supports this year's World Migratory Bird Day theme "Destination Flyways: Migratory Birds and Tourism". Indeed, WWT has been inviting people to visit and enjoy wetlands and their wildlife since our first centre opened in 1946. Our founder, Sir Peter Scott, recognised that people love to experience nature at close quarters, particularly

birds, and we now have 9 wetland centres in the UK which attract around a million people every year. Scott can be seen as one of the earliest champions of this type of tourism. Now, our centres form a core part of the regional, national and even international tourist industry across the UK, also inspiring people to value wetlands and to support their conservation.

Wildlife tourism can play a vitally important role not only in raising awareness amongst visitors about environmental issues, but can also act as a driving force for conservation. At WWT, income generated from our visitors supports further conservation activities, in the UK and abroad. This model also underpins conservation initiatives across the world through demonstrating the benefits of wetland and species conservation to local people, through improved livelihoods and inputs to the economy.

Migratory birds and sustainable tourism is a great message to be promoting, and we hope that the results will prompt better awareness-raising of the issues around migratory birds, encourage more people to visit and enjoy the birds, and lead to concrete conservation outcomes that support their long term conservation.

Martin Spray CBE

Chief Executive, WWT