Press FAQs

1. **Who organizes World Migratory Bird Day?**

   The campaign is organized by two international wildlife treaties administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) – the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), and the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA). World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) is also supported by a growing number of partners. The main partners behind WMBD are BirdLife International, Wetlands International, the East Asian - Australasian Flyway Partnership (EAAFP) and the International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation (CIC).

   Read more:

   United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

   Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbird Agreement (AEWA)

   Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

   World Migratory Bird Day Partners

2. **How many events are expected to take place on World Migratory Bird Day 2015? What are some of the ways that people can participate?**

   In 2014, there were an incredible number of 411 events in 85 different countries and territories. This year, organizers of World Migratory Bird Day are encouraging people around the world to put on as many events, if not more, to increase awareness worldwide of the need for migratory bird conservation.

   There are many ways that people can participate in World Migratory Bird Day 2015. People wishing to participate can hold their own event or take part in an event already organized in their region. There are no limits on event creativity. Past activities ranged from bird-watching and bird-counting tours, educational workshops, dramas, festivals, exhibitions, painting competitions to other awareness-raising events, which have been organized at schools, parks, town halls, education centres and nature reserves.

   This year, World Migratory Bird Day will for the first time be organizing a video contest. There is a total cash prize pool of €3,000 and the winner's video will become the official trailer for World Migratory Bird Day 2015. See the video contest page for more details.

3. **How many people are expected to take part in World Migratory Bird Day 2015?**
   Based on the positive experience of the last years we expect to have many WMBD event participants across the globe. We are prepared to support event organizers with posters, stickers and postcards. Furthermore, there is additional material such as flyers, reviews, guidelines and pictures for download available. The website www.worldmigratorybirdday.org as well as social

media such as Facebook, Twitter or Flickr will function as a platform for all participants to share their experiences and obtain information about the topic "Energy – make it bird-friendly!".

4. How many species of migratory birds are threatened?

A total of 2,274 species (ca. 23% of the world's birds) are considered migratory according to the CMS definition of migratory species. Of these, about 800 (ca. 35%) are currently covered by CMS and its related instruments.

At a global level, 14% (317) of the bird migratory species are considered threatened or near-threatened (17 Critically Endangered, 50 Endangered, 128 Vulnerable, and 122 Near Threatened) based on the 2010 IUCN Red List.

5. The theme for World Migratory Bird Day 2015 is "Energy – make it bird-friendly!" Why did you choose this theme?

In times of ever-increasing global demand for energy, developing new and expanding existing renewable energy technologies are key when striving towards a low carbon future. Yet energy cannot be truly sustainable and nature-friendly unless it fully takes biodiversity and, more specifically, migratory birds into consideration. With the theme "Energy – make it bird-friendly!" World Migratory Bird Day aims to highlight the importance of deploying energy technologies in a way that prevents, minimizes and mitigates impacts on migratory birds and their habitats.

6. Which species are particularly susceptible to impacts from energy infrastructure?

Raptors such as the Egyptian vulture, Griffon vulture, Eastern imperial eagle and Common kestrel are particularly vulnerable to energy infrastructure in particular wind turbines and overhead power lines. This also applies to other species of soaring birds such as the Oriental stork and the Eurasian Crane. The Great Bustard is another example of species which is affected by energy constructions, in particular overhead power lines.

7. How many migratory birds die every year due to energy infrastructure?

Every year, millions of migratory birds struggle with the massive expansion of various means of generating and distributing energy: collisions and electrocution due to power lines as well as barrier effects from energy infrastructure are causing mortality and displacement. Power lines are one of the major causes of unnatural deaths for birds. Every year up to 10,000 birds, particularly larger species, are electrocuted and on average many 100,000s are affected by collisions per country in the African-Eurasian region.

In addition, the birds suffer effects from habitat loss and degradation and other disturbances from the deployment of hydropower, bio-energy, ocean, solar, wind and geothermal energy technologies.

8. Are collisions and electrocutions the only negative impacts of energy infrastructure on migratory birds?

Birds collide with a cable or a structure supporting one and larger birds can suffer electrocution leading to direct mortality. Both collisions and electrocution have significant impacts on migratory birds, but they are not the only dangers. Migratory birds can also suffer effects from habitat loss,

fragmentation and degradation as well as disturbance and displacements when hydropower, bio-energy, ocean, solar, wind or geothermal energy technologies are located near to important breeding, wintering or stop-over sites.

9. How can the impacts of energy developments on migratory birds be avoided or mitigated? Which method or approach is the most effective?

Understanding specific migration routes and the importance of particular habitats is necessary to avoid or mitigate negative impacts on migratory birds. Location, design, abundance, construction, operation and maintenance of energy installations need to be carefully selected to avoid key breeding, feeding, resting, overwintering sites and migration routes for birds. Furthermore, strategic long-term planning of energy technologies is very important. This includes conducting Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) at the planning stage. During the life cycle of existing energy technologies, post-construction monitoring helps evaluate mitigation measures and predicted impacts. Risk maps outlining critical habitat for migratory birds can be developed through Strategic Impact Assessments (SIA).

In cases where energy infrastructure is built on or near key sites or routes used by migratory birds, measures to prevent collisions and electrocutions are recommended.

Modifications to power lines and structures can reduce the electrocution risk to birds by 50 per cent or more. Actions include:

- Removing redundant power lines;
- burying power lines (effective, but expensive);
- marking power lines or wind blades at least every five to ten metres to make them more visible to birds i.e. with high-contrast, reflective or moving markers, is expected to lower collision rates by at least 50 per cent;
- replacement of dangerous structures with bird-safe designs;
- additions of safe perches and nesting platforms;
- insulation of cables close to poles;
- increasing the distances between electric conductors and grounded hardware.

In the case of wind parks, shutting wind turbines in high-risk periods down can reduce bird mortality.

10. Can energy ever truly be made 'bird-friendly'? Won't there always be some impacts?

First, measures to prevent easily avoidable bird deaths by electrocution or collisions with power lines should be implemented. If during the process of planning and locating new facilities, birds are taken into account it will have positive impacts on them. The combination of continual technical improvement, the advances in understanding of the challenges for birds with energy infrastructure and the precise analysis of our efforts give rise to the hope of a future where negative impacts from energy infrastructure could be eliminated completely.

11. Aren't a few bird collisions with wind turbines and other renewable energy infrastructure a fair trade-off for reducing the impacts of climate change?

Development and expansion of renewable energy technologies are crucial to reduce carbon emissions and ultimately to fight climate change. Sustainable renewable energy production is expected to have positive effects on migratory birds by mitigating climate change and its impacts. However, if certain energy technologies are deployed without proper planning, design and risk assessment, they can pose a grave threat to migratory bird species.

When expanding energy production, transition to wildlife-friendly methods is a key step to protect life on Earth. The conservation of migratory birds needs to be considered in all phases of energy development at multiple levels - locally, nationally and internationally. Therefore, concerted conservation actions by governments, nature conservation organizations, scientists and the energy sector as well as the general public are necessary. This way the benefits of sustainable energy can be realized without the risk of harming migratory birds and their habitat.

While burying all overhead cables underground would be expensive, many other mitigation measures are inexpensive and easy to implement, and by preventing birds from electrocuting themselves and causing interruptions to electricity supply, would also be in the power companies' interests.

12. What other threats do migratory birds currently face?

Depending on the species concerned, some of the threats are unique but in general loss, degradation and modification of natural habitat are the main sources of danger, because they affect the places used by the birds to rest, feed and breed during their annual migration cycles.

Moreover, migratory birds are exposed to enhanced risks because they gather in large numbers, at specific locations, at predictable times, making them easy targets for human exploitation. According to unpublished data by Birdlife International, tens of millions of individual birds might be killed or trapped illegally across Mediterranean countries every year. Over the coming decades, climate change is anticipated to have a dramatic impact on the distribution and survival of migratory birds e.g. In the Arctic tundra, climate change may cause dramatic losses in waterbird breeding habitat. Climate change may also affect some species by uncoupling the timing of resource availability from the timing of migration.