



**MESSAGE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
OF THE
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

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on the occasion of

WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY

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"Unifying our Voices for Bird Conservation"

Rachel Carson, the late American biologist and conservationist, suggested "there is symbolic as well as actual beauty in the migration of the birds... something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature — the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after the winter."

As well as serving as reminders of the cycle of life, migratory birds are also good indicators of the general state of global biodiversity. When birds start disappearing it is a sure sign that something is wrong with the health of our environment. According to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, 13 per cent of the world's bird species are now considered threatened as a result of, among other things, habitat loss, pollution and climate change.

Birds are a vital part of biodiversity and play a critical role in the effective functioning of ecosystems worldwide. Migratory birds pollinate crops and help plants grow by dispersing seeds and preying on insects. They also serve as a source of food and economically and/or culturally important activities such as hunting, tourism and recreation.

Protecting migratory birds presents unique challenges. Their habitat knows no borders, making protection a globally shared responsibility. But by protecting them, we all also stand to benefit. For example, by maintaining and improving the quality of wetland ecosystems for migratory waterbirds, human communities dependent on those wetlands benefit from the continued provision of ecosystem services, such as water, food and fibre, and disaster risk reduction.

Furthermore, many sites identified as at-risk conservation areas for birds host numerous other threatened species of plants and animals. By conserving birds and their environment we ensure the conservation of biodiversity on a wider scale, and take another step closer towards living in harmony with nature.

