



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

Message from Martha Rojas Urrego Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands On the occasion of the World Migratory Bird Day

On the occasion of the World Migratory Bird Day 2018, it is important to highlight the importance of coastal wetlands to the survival and well-being of migratory birds. The evidence is clear regarding the linkage between loss of coastal wetlands and a decline in the populations of migratory birds.

Human pressure on coastal wetlands is increasing worldwide. Land claim, pollution, and unsustainable harvests are driving the declines of many species of migratory birds. Growing human populations are resulting in intense development pressures both in coastal zones as well as upstream where damming and other water management schemes are disrupting downstream ecological processes. 80% of the waste we produce is dumped untreated into waters that run into coastal zones, negatively impacting migratory birds.

It is the effective conservation, restoration and management of networks of coastal wetlands that is critical to safeguarding migratory shorebird populations around the world, and ensuring survival and recovery of threatened migratory coastal water birds.

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands brings together 170 countries and provides the global framework for the conservation and sustainable use of all wetlands. The Contracting Parties to the Convention have since its inception in 1971 paid particular attention to migratory birds. Of the current 2,300 Wetlands of International Importance, 47% have been specifically designated as Sites critical for migratory water birds.

This year we celebrate The World Migratory Bird Day at the unprecedented time when climate change and sustainable development are at the centre of the global political debate. Coastal wetlands conservation as a nature-based solution, contributes directly to mitigation and adaptation to climate change as well as multiple Sustainable Development Goals and especially SDG 14 which calls for us to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

We must help the world discover the importance of coastal wetlands in a collective, concerted and sustained effort towards the relevant 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Aichi Targets. The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands looks forward to working in partnership with others in the development and implementation of effective governance and management practices to ensure the conservation and wise use of coastal wetlands and ensuring the well-being and survival of migratory birds.