

Statement to mark World Migratory Bird Day 2018: “Unifying Our Voices for Bird Conservation”

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In these first mild spring nights our skies are crossed by millions of fast silhouettes flying north and east: migratory birds are back again. And they are back despite progressively reduced habitats due to impinging human activities and presence, despite ecological barriers like the Sahara get wider and wider as a consequence of deforestation in Africa and southwards advancement of the desert also as an effect of climate change. And despite active, illegal, widespread and unsustainable trapping and killing along their challenging routes.

They are back to breed and struggle for their survival. These days before going to bed let's raise our heads to the dark sky and think that in that very moment a migrant may be flying just over against the silent night, carefully following key constellations, sensing the invisible lines of the Earth magnetic field as a cue towards the North, adapting their flight altitude to track suitable wind conditions and minimize water loss.

Let's think of these fascinating creatures so inextricably linked to the same habitats we live in, so strongly influenced and governed by seasons and climate, so inevitably part of our own cultures as not to conceive our lives without birds around, in our eyes and ears.

And yet, also these days for so many species less birds are coming back. Habitat loss all along their complex migratory flyways and direct and indirect human impact cause a mortality these animals cannot cope with. The decreasing numbers of long-distance migrants in particular are an alarming signal we cannot ignore.

Hence, let's join our voices to make this alarm well heard by those who have the responsibility for a new perspective in the relationship between Man and Nature on the only Planet we have. And, thanks to CMS and AEWA, let's join our voices while joining in the struggle to defend and protect both the Palaearctic-African and Western Hemisphere migratory systems, vital links connecting continents, peoples and cultures.