

World Migratory Bird Day 2013

Statement by Fernando Spina Chair of the CMS Scientific Council



Then, one day the previously silent bushes resound with the amazing song of a freshly arrived male Nightingale. It would not be spring without birdsong around us. And incoming migratory birds are often heard before even being seen.

Among birds, song speaks of holding territory, potential competition for resources and mates, potential aggression, but also of the quality of singing males, an honest signal for the female of the male's fitness when she has to select a father for her chicks.

To us humans, bird song invokes the peaceful harmony of Nature, the marvellous variability in natural melodies, the joy of life.

Whatever the perspective, song is an easy and efficient way to confirm the presence of birds and a highly diverse spring dawn chorus is a direct indicator of the richness of local birdlife.

Already back in 1962 with her *Silent Spring*, Rachel Carson warned the world of the dramatic effects of pesticides on the environment, particularly on birds. This book surely helped achieve a total ban on DDT in the U.S.A. in 1972. However, since then Man has committed every possible mistake towards Nature, and the risk of silent springs is ever increasing.

Following what has become an important tradition, on 11-12 May CMS and AEWA will celebrate the World Migratory Bird Day 2013. Being fully aware that without migratory birds the world would be a much more risky, as well as somber place to live in, this year the message is for international co-operation and networking to ensure the survival of migratory birds.

People living in different countries and even continents share the chance to enjoy the contact with same individual birds following their invisible pathways. With their song, incoming migratory birds are the heralds of spring; on us lies the responsibility of ensuring a future for migratory birds as a vital component of Nature. In order to allow future generations to still feel the thrill of the song of a freshly arrived male Nightingale, let's work and act together to make World Migratory Bird Day 2013 an important step for improved networking for environmental conservation!