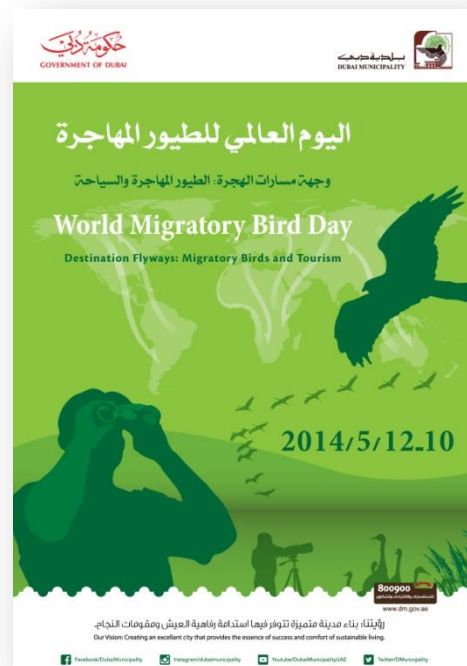


DUBAI MUNICIPALITY
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT
MARINE ENVIRONMENT AND WILDLIFE SECTION

World Migratory Bird Day
2014
Emirate of Dubai, United Arab Emirates

ACTIVITY REPORT



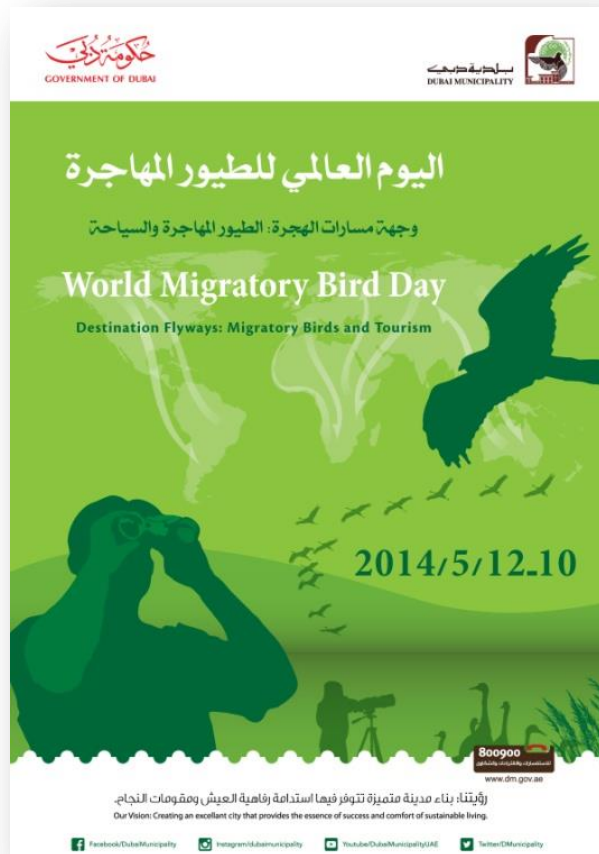
Introduction

World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) was initiated in 2006 and is an annual awareness-raising campaign highlighting the need for the protection of migratory birds and their habitats. On the second weekend each May, people around the world take action and organize public events such as bird festivals, education programmes and birdwatching excursions to celebrate WMBD.

Dubai Municipality (DM) has celebrated this campaign since 2008 through organizing seminars, and inviting specialists as per the theme of the year, and conducting photography contests, and rewards for best photographs, and inviting school students and concerned parties.

With the theme “Destination Flyways: Migratory Birds and Tourism”, World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) 2014 highlights the links between migratory bird conservation, local community development and wildlife watching tourism around the world. Wetland centres are a great example of how migratory birds attract visitors, with their range of events, exhibits and knowledgeable staff that can engage, educate and entertain.

This year the Dubai Municipality engaged itself in different activities to further raise the awareness of the constituents of Dubai. Since Dubai is a haven for photography enthusiasts, we conducted a competition that was not limited to the DM personnel but also to the general public. The pictures that were taken were exhibited in DM establishments to showcase the beautiful birds in the Ras Al Khor Wildlife Sanctuary. Newspaper articles and internet news publications further widening the audience of this year’s celebration



Seminar Proper

The seminar this year was well attended. More than 130 attendees participated in the event. Representatives from the governments entities, e.g. Ministry of Environment and Water and Dubai Falcon Hospital, private institutions and students from 5 different secondary schools graced the event.

Mr Mohammed AbdulRahman Hassan Abdulla, Head Of Section of the Marine Environment And Wildlife Section gave his opening remarks. He set the tune and informed the audience the importance of migratory birds not just because they are important biological indicators, but of their significance in adding value to the economic activity of any country.



He discussed the valuable input the migratory birds on the tourism industry and how it affects directly or indirectly the local communities in terms of economic values. He further discussed the project "Destination Flyway" and how it would provide valuable inputs in better understanding the behavior of migratory birds so as to better establish measures in ensuring that flyways are better protected.\

The first resource speaker was Mr Sandhya Prakash. She is an entrepreneur by profession but is an avid birder. Her passion for birds lead her to become a member of the Dubai Natural Heritage Group and the Emirates Birding Records Committee.

Ms Prakash shared during the seminar her observation as avid birder in the emirates. She related her favorite birds and where



these birds could be found and when. As resident of Dubai and as an Indian national, she shared her observations regarding the birds found in both geographical areas. But more that her disclosures of her passion for birds, she articulated some of the facilities and services that needs to be improved in the Emirate of Dubai, if not the whole of UAE. She expressed that it is quite important to improve in order to cater and encourage the bird tourism as well as help the conservation programs of the government. She stressed that by enhancing the birding tourism, it directly makes the tourists partners in the conservation of migratory birds.

The second speaker is Mr Peter Bergh. He is the Managing Director of the Royal Shaheen Events and has been passionate falconer for than five years. Though relatively “new” in the industry of falconry, he describes that he breaths and lives the industry. His company provides entertainment for hotels that asks for shows featuring falcons.



The interesting part of the presentation was his experience in training the falcons in order for it to be an effective “pest control” agent. Mr Bergh shared his experience with the falcons and how they are being utilized in the control of “undesirable” population of birds frequenting the buildings of Dubai. He stressed the importance of environmentally friendly methods in controlling “nuisance” birds in the metropolis and how the falcons has been a proven means of control.

He also discussed the difference between the hybrid and “natural” falcons that are being used in the industry. Stressed that the birds they are using are hybrids, that is, the birds are not taken from the wild but from breeding centers.

Photography Competition

As part of the commemoration of the World Migratory Bird Day 2014, a photography completion was launched by the Environment Department of the Dubai Municipality, spearheaded by the Environmental Awareness Section in coordination with the Marine Environment and Wildlife Section.



The competition attracted 36 photography enthusiasts submitting over 164 photos. The participants were personnel of the Dubai Municipality and from visitors of the RAKWS bird hides.

The competition was a great venue for photographers to see the birdlife in the RAKWS and capture its different behavior in a very creative way.

The best picture was taken by Mr Fouad Thani. The second and third prizes were given to Mr Dhammika Peduruarachchi and Mr Abas Mohamed Ibrahim, respectively.

Photo Exhibit

The photos that were taken by the participant of the photography competition were exhibited at the venue of the World Migratory Bird Day seminar. The interesting part of the exhibit is that it was there were the third prize winner was chosen by the participants of the seminar.



After the seminar, the exhibit was transferred on May 15, 2014 to the Environment Department's field office in Abu Hail. The purpose was showcase the birds of the RAKWS to the clients of the Dubai Municipality. A small competition was given during the day to assess the level of awareness of the spectators regarding migratory birds. The winners were given gifts for their participation.



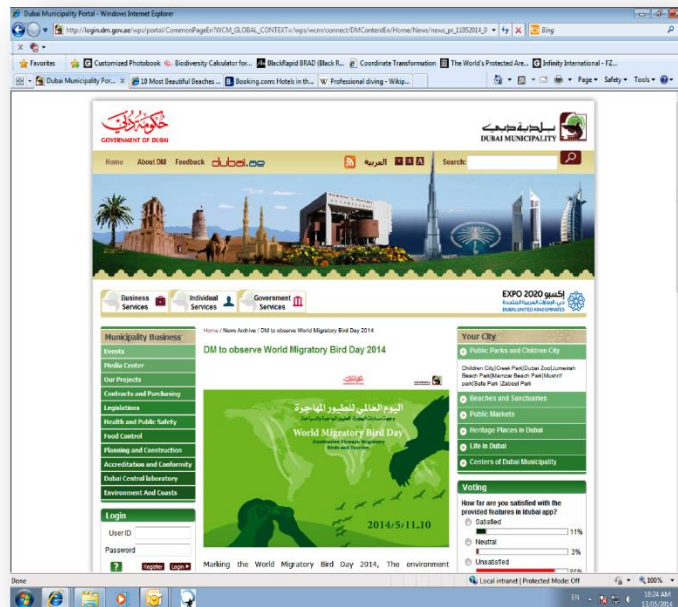
Dubai Municipality Intranet Posting

To better inform all the employees of the Dubai Municipality, the poster of this year's WMBD was made into the wallpaper of all the computer units.



Internet News Publications

The Environmental Awareness Section publish a story of the event in the Dubai Municipality's official website. It features the history of the event in the Environment Department and how it has grown through the years. The story also invited the general public to participate in the activities that the DM has prepared.



Conclusion

The celebration of the World Migratory Bird Day 2014 was well participated compared to previous years. It is also the first WMBD event since the DM annually conduct the seminar where the resource speakers were “everyday birders” and not the usual academics or government officials. Hearing their opinions and how they see migratory birds in the light of tourism was an eye opener and was a great platform for the DM to assess on how far the awareness program has gone.