

World Migratory Bird Day – May 10, 2016

Theme: Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds

For the last thirty years, migratory birds have faced an alarming population decline. Their endangerment is due to several factors including climate change, and the destruction of their natural habitats. However, the main threat to their existence is poor coordination of conservation and protection. While protected areas, relevant laws, and law enforcement programmes exist in some countries, they may not in others. The conservation of migratory birds is a global concern, as nearly 90% of migratory birds are inadequately protected (*Science magazine, vol 350, 4 Dec. 2015*). In addition to a lack of protection, migratory birds are illegally killed and traded due to either certain cultural traditions or economic gains.



In the Mediterranean region close to 25 million birds are unlawfully hunted and killed every year (Birdlife International, *The Killing*, 2015). One of the challenges in this region is the lack of effective and efficient law enforcement despite the existence of strong laws such as the European Bird Directive. Therefore, INTERPOL has engaged with CMS to establish an Intergovernmental Mediterranean Task force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds. This partnership will allow us to combine resources and expertise in order to address these illegal activities.

As transnational environmental crimes have a transboundary impact, cross border co-operation and strong partnerships are crucial to fight these crimes and ensure the security of the global environment. INTERPOL will continue its past engagement in combatting illegal trading and killing of wildlife in general, especially since these crimes may be linked to other transnational crimes such as human trafficking and drug smuggling. The partnership with CMS and its Intergovernmental Task Force will allow us to fight these crimes.

Wildlife crime such as migratory bird smuggling is not limited to individual countries, as it frequently involves other countries in the process of transporting illegally poached birds to final markets. “This requires a multiagency and intelligence-led approach, as well as cooperation with national, regional and international partners,” said David Higgins, Head of the INTERPOL Environmental Security Programme.

INTERPOL welcomes the World Migratory Bird Day and underlines its support for the CMS Intergovernmental Task Force on Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory birds in the Mediterranean Region (MIKT), of which INTERPOL is a member. The Task Force will provide a platform to engage with the international community to address illicit activities linked to Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds.