

# Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

## **First Meeting of the Americas Flyways Task Force**

(26 – 27 July 2018, Florianopolis, Brazil)

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### **WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY**

*(Prepared by the Secretariat)*

# World Migratory Bird Day

## *Scoping Paper*



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## SCOPING PAPER

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The following document is an updated version of a Scoping Paper that was originally published by the CMS and AEWA Secretariats in January 2016. It has been revised to act as a background document for the “First Meeting of the Americas Flyways Task Force” taking place in Florianopolis, Brazil on 26-27 July 2018.

### Introduction

World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) is an annual, global awareness-raising campaign highlighting the need for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats. Each year, on the second Saturday in May and October, people and dedicated organizations around the world take action and organize hundreds of public events such as bird festivals, education programmes, exhibitions and bird-watching excursions to celebrate the phenomenon of bird migration.

Over the years, the campaign has grown to become an important global commemorative occasion specifically dedicated to migratory birds, annually triggering hundreds of dedicated events in countries all around the world. As such, WMBD represents a unique international occasion for the global community to celebrate the wonder of bird migration, to emphasize the importance of international cooperation to conserve migratory birds and to highlight the multiple threats that they face.

### Looking Back

WMBD was initiated in 2006 by the Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation

of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA) in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) – two international environment treaties administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Originally, the idea of designating a day for migratory birds arose in the United States in 1993, when the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology initiated celebrations of the ‘International Migratory Bird Day’ (IMBD), which encourages bird festivals and education programmes across the Americas. IMBD has grown into a framework underpinning 700 events across the Americas, from Canada to Argentina and more than 15 countries in the Caribbean.

Although this day was - and continues to be - successfully celebrated in the western hemisphere, something similar was missing for the rest of the world.

The first WMBD took place in Kenya in 2006. At the time, migratory birds were receiving very negative media coverage as a result of them being believed to be the main cause for





Susan Bonfield, EFTA Director, Bradnee Chambers, CMS Executive Secretary, Jacques Trouvilliez, AEWA Executive Secretary, at the CMS COP12 partnership agreement side-event, Manila

## New Partnership Unifies two Campaigns

On 26 October 2017 in the margins of the CMS COP12 in Manila, Environment for the Americas (EFTA), the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) and the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA), announced an innovative partnership to increase awareness of the plight of migratory birds around the world. The new partnership formally unites two of the world's largest education campaigns about birds, International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD) and World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) in a bid to strengthen global recognition and appreciation of migratory birds and highlight the urgent need for their conservation. From 2018 onwards, the new joint campaign will adopt the single name of „World Migratory Bird Day“ and major events to celebrate the day will be organized twice a year, on the second Saturday in May and in October.

The collaboration establishes a single, global campaign organized around the planet's major migratory bird corridors. These include the African-Eurasian, the East Asian-Australasian, and the Americas flyways.

the spread of Avian Influenza (H5N1) around the world. The original motivation behind WMBD was to organize a public awareness-raising campaign to try to counter some of the negative and often unbalanced publicity migratory birds were receiving at the peak of the Avian Influenza outbreak in 2006.

Since then, WMBD has been celebrated annually and has been growing in popularity each year. The global campaign continues to be organized centrally from Bonn, Germany by the CMS and AEWA Secretariats. Each year, more

countries, organizations and people are joining the campaign. Since its inception, over 3,000 events in 140 countries have been organized to mark World Migratory Bird Day.

Since the beginning, the event has been used to stimulate awareness on the need to conserve migratory birds around a centrally chosen theme each year. The website ([www.worldmigratorybirdday.org](http://www.worldmigratorybirdday.org)) has acted as the main hub of the campaign, providing the information and materials related to each year's theme and has been the central space for event

organizers from around the world to register and share their WMBD events with a growing global WMBD community.

The core partners of WMBD have historically been: BirdLife International, Wetlands International, UNEP, CIC, EAAFP, CMS and AEWA and funding for the organization of the global campaign has in the past primarily been provided by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB) as a regular annual voluntary contribution to AEWA.

### Taking WMBD to the Next Level

While WMBD has seen a steady annual growth in terms of its overall popularity and global reach, the campaign has the potential to grow much further and reach new audiences at a much larger scale.

The time is right to try to take the campaign to “the next level” by **identifying, agreeing on and then pursuing a set of new goals and a mix of strategies** which will define the course for the future and enable the campaign to grow in the years to come.

The underlying question guiding the new approach is: how can we maximize the impact of the now established campaign, make it more attractive to partners and participants and allow it to reach out to even more people around the world?

### Next Level Goals:

- **Engaging wider audiences:** Reaching new audiences at a much larger scale is central for the future of WMBD. This could be achieved through: Simplification of core messages, focusing the campaign around its core, universal elements – the “phenomenon of bird migration”, the “global celebration factor” and “the fundamental idea that international cooperation is essential for the conservation of migratory birds”. Wider audiences will also be reached through an even stronger emphasis on the development of an attractive global website along with creative, inspiring and shareable (primarily digital) content.
- **Activating new and old partners and countries:** Mobilizing greater support

and involvement of the existing WMBD partners and securing new ones, clarifying and specifying roles of partners and focusing energy on reinforcing and strengthening partnerships around WMBD would significantly improve the reach and quality of the campaign. CMS and AEWA should initiate the creation of a Steering Committee for World Migratory Bird Day consisting of the core partners, which will aid the process of selecting the theme, provide advice on and support the implementation of future campaigns. Existing partners should be mobilized to play a more active role in developing and promoting the annual campaign amongst their networks. A special focus should also be placed on actively mobilizing countries to act as hosts for central WMBD events and to try to make individual countries become WMBD flyway champions, taking on a prominent leadership role within their respective flyways.

- **Re-branding the campaign around Flyways:** Present WMBD from a flyway perspective, clearly using the flyway conservation idea as the underlying logic in the brand development in order to highlight the importance of international (flyway-scale) cooperation for the conservation of migratory birds (globally). This process of re-branding along flyways already began in 2017, but further resources are needed to produce a totally re-branded campaign along the world’s major flyway systems.
- **WMBD as UN-backed campaign:** Highlight and strive to establish WMBD as a United Nations-backed campaign, strengthening the global recognition of WMBD. Here it would be desirable to try to secure global acceptance for a specific day (or days) in the annual UN calendar of commemorative days to mark as WMBD. In this context, it is important to find a common, global approach between the International Migratory Bird Day – led by the USFWS for the Americas and WMBD being led by the CMS and AEWA Secretariats. In this respect the new Partnership Agreement signed between CMS, AEWA and Environment for the Americas (EFTA) at CMS COP12 in Manila in October 2017 has been a very important development. In addition, the IMBD Board



members' decision in early 2018 to adopt the name of "World Migratory Bird Day" to replace "International Migratory Bird Day" was also a significant contribution towards unifying the two initiatives into a single, truly global campaign for migratory birds.

- **New fundraising approach:** Increase fundraising efforts to generate resources and support which will allow the campaign to grow, focusing both on the government and private-sector. Investment will be needed to implement the new branding, a state-of-the-art website and to develop "next level", globally appealing creative and professional content. A partnership approach involving CMS, AEWA and EFTA in fundraising for WMBD should be pursued.
- **Build up networks:** Use WMBD as a platform to strengthen existing and build up new networks, among different countries and

sites along the respective flyways, amongst like-minded organizations, individuals, scientists and experts.

- **Strengthening the global recognition of CMS, AEWA and the key WMBD partners:** as the main organizations behind WMBD and two key intergovernmental bodies tasked with the conservation of migratory birds – using WMBD to also highlight the treaties' niche and the specific work they are doing along the flyways they are covering.



# KEY ELEMENTS OF THE NEW CONCEPT FURTHER EXPLAINED

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## 1. Flyway Focus

The future focus of the united World Migratory Bird Day will be on flyways. Re-branding the campaign around flyways, bringing out the global nature of WMBD through a new permanent flyway focus. The flyway concept and the idea of flyway cooperation will become the main frame through which WMBD will be presented in future. WMBD will become a global platform and gateway to showcase the inter-connectedness of the various flyway systems as well as provide an opportunity to showcase and strengthen individual “flyway identities”, by allowing WMBD activities in the different countries to be linked to the various flyway systems of which they are part. A new flyway focus could also be a way to increase the engagement of the various flyway-scale instruments that exist, giving each a strong role in the organization of WMBD in their ranges. The flyway concept can act as a guiding line and is a chance to bring global issues back to the ground, along flyway lines, to create ownership around issues and species that are shared by countries of a specific flyway. A central flyway mapping tool could be developed and play a key role in highlighting “flyway activities” to mark WMBD, but also actively to present satellite tagging / migration projects within the various flyways, allowing people to follow the migration of flagship species within each flyway.

## 2. Engaging Wider Audiences

The involvement of a wider range of audiences is central to the new concept: Addressing the general public, actively reaching out to and involving the expert and scientific community – stimulating actions along the flyway (by the different range countries and BirdLife Partners), during the entire year – linked to the timing of migration / migration peaks in the range countries. The aim should be to engaging as many actors as possible, making WMBD a relevant platform for a wide range of communities and target audiences. Below are a number of initial ideas which could be pursued as ways to engage wider audiences:

- **Creative content:** A stronger emphasis should be placed on the development of creative, inspiring and shareable (primarily digital) content for WMBD. The support of external communication agencies and professionals with proven experience in global communication / campaigns should be sought and funds should be raised to enable the CMS and AEWA Secretariats and EFTA to engage them. For example, a plan could be to target “in-flight magazines” (both print and video) and develop creative content which links the experience of “human flight” with “bird flight” and the global celebration elements of WMBD.
- **Citizen science:** WMBD could be used to expand and promote existing popular bird observation projects such as “Spring Alive” – a BLI project engaging citizens, especially children in the observation and mapping of bird migration (“Spring Alive” is an international project to encourage children’s interest in nature and the conservation of migratory birds. By posting their first sightings of Barn Swallow, White Stork, Common Cuckoo, Common Swift and European Bee-eater on the [www.springalive.net](http://www.springalive.net) website, children from Europe, Central Asia and Africa create a real-time map of the incredible journeys that these birds take every year).
- **Scientific community:** WMBD could be used as a platform to launch key internationally relevant scientific studies on topics related to bird migration. Leading international scientific journals could be engaged to try to time the release of new scientific publications related to migratory birds around WMBD. One could also work with publishers to try to provide access to scientific publications related to bird migration via the WMBD website.
- **Teachers and schools:** WMBD could be developed to become a global learning platform for topics related to bird migration and bird conservation. WMBD could serve as a hub for sharing and making available best-practice communication, educational

and public awareness materials (sample lesson plans, interactive games, make-up sets for children) from around the world. The website could also contain a database of international “bird experts” willing to talk to school children for awareness raising, or a “school corner” where schools or individual classes can connect with each other around the topic of bird migration or events to mark WMBD.

- **Media:** In order to reach out to new audiences, WMBD has to become more interesting for the media. Holding national, regional or even international media events marking WMBD could be a way to engage the media more. In addition, WMBD could be used to initiate the development of a global “story platform” on topics related to bird migration (as a resource for journalists) or media partnerships could be developed on the national level by relevant ministries and NGOs to ensure greater coverage of WMBD activities taking place in a given country.
- **Bird-related communities:** WMBD could be shaped into becoming a platform through which different bird related communities could be reached. From birdwatchers, ringers to bird photographers to those involved in bird monitoring and research.

### 3. WMBD as UN-backed Campaign

The fact that two of the three leading organizations behind WMBD are both international environment treaties administered by UNEP, is already justification enough to brand WMBD as a UN-backed campaign. However, WMBD could be accorded full UN recognition (as is the case with the CITES-led World Wildlife Day). Commitments to this end have been made at AEWA MOP5 and at CMS COP11 where Resolution 11.9 tabled by Kenya was adopted, inviting the UN General Assembly to consider declaring 10 May of each year as World Migratory Bird Day. An official UNGA Resolution on WMBD would significantly strengthen the global recognition of WMBD as a UN-backed campaign and help in mobilizing greater international awareness of WMBD. However, the discussion on a UN GA Resolution will need to take into account the new formula adopted in by the unified WMBD campaign in 2018, which states that both the second Saturday in May and second Saturday

in October are the annual peak days for global WMBD celebrations.

### 4. New Partnership Approach

A new partnership approach should be actively followed, which concentrates both on international NGOs and countries. The aim should be to mobilize greater support and engagement of the existing WMBD partners, including from UNEP and also helps to secure new ones. A key element of this new approach is to work closely with the existing partners, to better define their roles, outlining what is expected of them as partners in terms of developing and promoting the annual campaign amongst their networks. In particular, organizations such as BirdLife International could help to spread the news about WMBD amongst the global BirdLife network and amongst the national BirdLife affiliates.

A special focus should also be placed on actively mobilizing countries to act as official hosts for central WMBD events. These could be national, regional or even international (flyway-scale) events involving a number of countries to mark WMBD. Depending on the format of the celebrations, the events should be nationally driven and supported, allowing individual countries to become WMBD flyway champions, taking on a prominent leadership role within their flyways. CMS and AEWA representation could be sought at the events, yet the primary responsibility of organizing the events would rest with the countries.

New partners could be recruited along thematic lines, such as UNESCO for World Heritage Sites, Ramsar for wetlands, WWF Wetlands Link International on education and training, RSPB with regards to international satellite tagging projects, UNWTO for bird-related tourism related activities and projects.

### 5. New Fundraising Approach

Fundraising efforts around WMBD should be increased to generate adequate resources to support both the re-development of the campaign and help it grow in the long term. The focus should be both on government and private-sector funding. A fundraising strategy should be developed in cooperation with the main partners, which looks at both countries and private sector cooperate sponsors, for



example with international airlines, optics manufacturers, outdoor equipment suppliers etc. Fundraising efforts should focus on supporting three main areas:

1. The global campaign (new branding, state-of-the-art website, development of high-

quality content, posters, educational material)

2. Supporting related activities of WMBD partners (Spring Alive)

3. Supporting global WMBD events (Support to developing countries in the organization of WMBD events).



In case you have any questions or comments on WMBD, please contact:

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