

PRESS RELEASE

Abu Dhabi, European Commission, Germany, Monaco and Philippines Take Champions Awards at Major UN Wildlife Summit

Manila, 22 October 2017 – Abu Dhabi, the European Commission, Germany and Monaco tonight became ‘Champions’ in the global fight to protect migratory species.

The awards, on the eve of the triennial summit of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS COP12), recognize their contributions to solving some of the critical issues facing migratory species, by delivering support beyond funding.

The five new Champions were honored for initiatives ranging from combating illegal killing of birds to implementing concerted measures to preserve marine life.

Bradnee Chambers, Executive Secretary of CMS said: “On behalf of the entire CMS Family, I would like to express my sincerest thanks to our Champions, whose generosity enables so much invaluable work to be carried out that is of direct benefit to species across the globe or helps improve our understanding of the great natural phenomenon – animal migration. And I would encourage more governments and institutions to follow the example set by Champions whom we have honoured tonight.”

- The **Environment Agency of Abu Dhabi** was recognised for the Conservation of Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia for the period 2015-2019 and the conservation of Dugongs and their Habitats for the period 2015-2019.
Dr Abdullah Eisa Zamzam, Assistant Secretary General of Operations at the Environment Agency, Abu Dhabi, said: “Many of the migratory species of priority interest to Abu Dhabi Emirate and the UAE are also the focus of the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS). The UAE lies along the migratory pathway for 42 of the 93 species of African-Eurasian migratory birds of prey under the Raptors MOU. While, eighteen of Abu Dhabi’s twenty most threatened marine and terrestrial species are migratory. Of these, sixteen are addressed by CMS or one of its instruments.
“No matter how committed and well-resourced our country may be, long-term conservation of migratory animals can only be achieved by engaging with other countries through international cooperation and closely coordinating conservation activities across each species’ range.”
- The **European Commission** was awarded for its efforts in addressing Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean in 2018-2020. Stefan Leiner, Head of the Biodiversity Unit in the European Commission and Head of the EU Delegation at CMS Cop 12 said: “I am very honoured to receive on behalf of the European Commission the CMS Champion Plus Award for the Commission’s support to the work of the CMS. Secretariat, in particular its Task Force on Illegal Killing,

Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds in the Mediterranean. All wild bird species natural occurring in the EU, including those listed in the CMS appendices are protected across the 28 Member States by the EU Birds Directive. However, many of these species, including migratory birds, still face many pressures and threats. Illegal killing, trapping and trade of birds, both within the EU and in its neighbouring and partner countries, are still serious concerns. Within the EU we need to redouble efforts to fully implement the Birds Directive, which strictly prohibits such activities. The work being done by the CMS and the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds in promoting coordinated action to combat this scourge is essential to protect and restore healthy populations of our extraordinary shared natural heritage of wild bird species.

The **Government of Federal Republic of Germany** was named a 'Champion' for Reconciling Energy Sector Developments with Migratory Species Conservation in 2018-2020.

Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety Ms. Schwarzelühr-Sutter said: "To fight climate change we need an unprecedented transformation of our economy and our energy system towards renewable energy sources. This structural change cannot take place without impacts on people, nature and the landscape. Because of this, we must try to find forward-looking ways to accommodate these extensive changes to the landscape and to protect biodiversity. A holistically sustainable transformation of the energy system can only be achieved if it takes place in harmony with nature. This is why we are fully dedicated to the important work of the CMS Energy Task Force that is working towards that aim."

- The **Principality of Monaco** was commended for its commitment to Marine Species Conservation 2018-2020.
- The **Government of the Philippines** was awarded for its efforts to protect the Whale Shark.
Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, Secretary Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Philippines Environment and Natural Resources, said: "We need more champions in our continuing fight against hunting, habitat loss, pollution and wildlife trade."

Launched in 2014, the Migratory Species Champion Programme has recognized several institutions. It is open to Governments, companies, organizations and individuals willing to make a financial commitment of at least three years for one or more specific initiatives that fall under the CMS family umbrella. It offers a portfolio of initiatives that contribute to the implementation of a large programme targeting a species, a group of species or a cross-cutting issue.

The Programme and its results are promoted on a dedicated webpage:
www.migratoryspecies.org/champion.

For interviews or to speak to an expert, please contact:

Florian Keil,

Coordinator of the Joint Communications Team at the UNEP/CMS and UNEP/AEWA Secretariats

Veronika Lenarz, Public Information, UNEP/CMS Secretariat

Email: press@cms.int

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